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**Le Paris de l'Extrême-Orient:**

*La 'françité' de la Concession française de Shanghai,*

*1900-1912*

**The Paris of the East:**

*Putting the 'French' in French Concession in Shanghai,*

*1900-1912*

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## RÉSUMÉ

La Concession française n'a représenté qu'une petite partie du territoire de Shanghai. Bien que les ressemblances avec Paris aient été limitées, la ville chinoise s'est pourtant fait connaître comme le « Paris de l'Extrême-Orient ». Cette identification à la capitale française s'explique par la présence de divertissements et de richesses françaises, alors que le potentiel économique et politique de la ville demeurait quant à lui encadré par des établissements internationaux. La présence d'un certain esthétisme français favorisant l'établissement et le divertissement n'a sans doute pas eu la même importance que la mainmise française dans le domaine des affaires et dans l'exercice du pouvoir politique. Dans la sphère culturelle toutefois, et tout particulièrement en éducation, l'influence française est indéniable.

Les recherches visant à comprendre ce qui a conduit Shanghai à être considérée comme le « Paris de l'Extrême-Orient »; la représentation qu'avaient les résidents français d'eux-mêmes et de leur rôle; puis de quelle façon ces identités françaises se sont manifestées dans la période de transition de 1900-1912, ouvrent de nouvelles perspectives sur l'impérialisme français outre-mer du début du vingtième siècle. L'analyse de : 1) la façade française – les mythes et les réalités du Shanghai français; 2) l'identité d'expatriés – la composition et les buts des résidents français de la Concession; 3) le fardeau du Français – l'impact de la « mission civilisatrice » française à Shanghai, permet d'illustrer à la fois les relations avec la France, l'existence d'une communauté internationale à Shanghai et la perspective française des populations indigènes chinoises.

## ABSTRACT

While the French Concession made up only a small part of the area of Shanghai, most of which did not resemble Paris, the Chinese city came to be known as the "Paris of the East". Justifying the identification with the French capital was the presence of French amenities and luxuries; yet, the economic and political power in Shanghai rested within the borders of the International Settlement. The façade of a French aesthetic to the French Concession that made it desirable for residence and leisure, did not equate to French pre-eminence in business or the exercise of political power; but in the cultural sphere, particularly in education, the French did make an impact.

The investigation of how Shanghai came to be carry the "Paris of the East" moniker; the self-conception and role of the French residents in Shanghai; and how these French identities were manifest in Shanghai in the transitional 1900-1912 period offers a new perspective on French overseas imperialism in the early twentieth century. The three phase analysis of: 1) the French façade – the 'myths and realities' of French Shanghai; 2) Expatriate Identity – the composition and goals of the French residents of the concession; and 3) the Frenchman's Burden – the impact of the French *mission civilisatrice* in Shanghai, illustrates the relationships with France, the international community of Shanghai and the indigenous Chinese population for a French perspective.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Historical Context

Before 1830 China was completely closed, except for a small trading post in Guangzhou<sup>1</sup> (Canton). European imperial expansion in the early nineteenth century increased interest in China as a market and source of trade materials. The rulers of the Qing Dynasty resisted, but China would be opened by force. The British negotiated for five cities to be opened for trade following their victory over China in the First Opium War (1839-1842).<sup>2</sup> The French took advantage of the weakness of the Chinese Empire, concluding their own treaty in 1844, establishing a French administrative zone in the city of Shanghai. This territory was expanded and authority extended to create the French Concession on 6 April 1849.

In China, each foreign Consul had the power to deal directly with Chinese administrators. The French envoy, Théodore de Lagrené, negotiated the treaty, and a member of the delegation was made the first French consul-general of the treaty port. The French Concession developed quickly. By 1850 trade volume had already surpassed Guangzhou. Four years later daily operations of the foreign Concessions were being jointly administered by a council of ratepayers, responsible for roads, streetlights, police force and infrastructure. The French Concession established a Municipal Council in 1862, though all decisions remained subject to the approval of the consul. The next year the International Settlement was created by the combination of the British and American Concessions; the French negotiated but declined to join, fearing their political, economic and social interests would be subjugated by the larger English population.

Some familiar applications of French colonial policy were also evident in the Concession. There was a desire to “civilise” the local population, and to assimilate, at least a business elite.

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<sup>1</sup> All Chinese words are Romanised using the pinyin system, except those appearing in titles or quotations. . A table of common Romanisations appears in Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The open port cities were Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou and Ningbo

The French language and Catholicism were an integral part of the process. The economic presence was the original *raison d'être* in seeking the Concession. Port Concessions were designed to dominate their regional economy and Shanghai had succeeded in this by 1900. It became a form of economic imperialism in lieu of full-colonisation, and included the installation of French financial institutions. The French held confidence that, eventually, the “backward” Chinese merchants would emulate their system. This situation created direct competition with the other colonial powers,<sup>3</sup> who were working from the same premise.

The cultural impact, for France, was more significant than the economic one. Concerted efforts were made so that French would be the second language of the city. Also on the cultural front, France was the leading proponent of Catholicism in Shanghai, establishing a religious protectorate over all Catholics in China (regardless of nationality). In addition to Treaty Port trading rights, de Lagrené negotiated for the practice of Christianity in China, forcing the repeal of an anti-Christian imperial edict from 1724. The French presence notably included the Jesuit Centre at Xujiahui, which helped to administer policy and augment the spread of French values. At the commencement of the study period, the Concession had been in existence for fifty years, and had established business, infrastructure and culture. But none of these were ever static and the period 1900-1912 provided significant disruption to old orders and a repositioning of French interest to suit the new reality of the geo-political dynamic between the International Settlement to the north and the Chinese populations within and without.

## 2. Research Objectives

Shanghai has had many nicknames over the years, including “the Pearl of the Orient” and “the Whore of Asia,” but the best known is “the Paris of the East.” This last name was conferred for numerous reasons – tree-lined boulevards, impressive architecture along the riverfront, high-

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<sup>3</sup> Notably Britain, the United States, Germany, Russia and, later, Japan.

fashion and culture, and a reputation for decadence, all reminiscent of the French capital. Certainly, the presence of the French Concession contributed to giving Shanghai the image of Paris transplanted to China.

The period 1900-1912 is significant for numerous developments in China, starting with the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). More significantly, the period closes with the Xinhai Revolution (1911-1912), which brought centuries of Chinese imperial rule to an end with the establishment of the Chinese Republic. During this period the tensions between the European powers were increasing in Europe and in overseas interests, such as Shanghai.

The international communities of Shanghai, perhaps due to the geographical distance from the home country, developed a particular mode of interaction and self-conception. The French contribution to this lifestyle augmented the “Paris of the East” reputation.

To analyse the French content of the “Paris of the East” three key themes emerge as particularly revelatory: (1) the physical development of a French community through infrastructure, aesthetics, institutions and the apparatus of European living; (2) the lifestyle of the French population, from societal organisation and integration to maintaining cultural norms, filtered through the dynamic relationship with the rest of the international community of Shanghai; and (3) the ‘sharing’ of French values and identity with the Chinese population of the French Concession through the implementation of the *mission civilisatrice*.

The ever-changing political, social and cultural dynamics greatly influenced the development of an identity unique to the French Concession in the first dozen years of the twentieth century. These three themes illustrate the French perspective on the environment and conditions in which this mode of being French originated, how it was made manifest by the residents of the Concession, and what impact the practice of this identity had on the co-habitants of Shanghai.

### 3. Thesis and Hypotheses

How did Shanghai come to be known as the Paris of the East; what was the self-conception and role of the French in Shanghai; and how did the French *mission civilisatrice* impact the situation in Shanghai during the transitional 1900-1912 period?

I) Shanghai gained and kept its reputation as a French metropolis despite a lack of real French influence. The origin and purpose of the French Concession, the realities of the living environment in French Shanghai, such as aesthetics, the economy and institutions; and the power dynamics of the broader city show the rationale, but question the legitimacy of recognising Shanghai as the “Paris of the East.”

II) The development of the French identity unique to Shanghai was modified and solidified in the 1900 to 1912 period. The administrative and social structures implemented from the earliest days of the community meant a French citizen had the opportunity to be “French” in Shanghai. Despite considerable overlap with the other foreign communities, aspects of French life remained present; though, ultimately long-term residents came to see themselves as both French and members of the International Community of Shanghai simultaneously.

III) From the late nineteenth-century French colonial enterprise had been closely tied to the *mission civilisatrice* as a matter of execution and public relations. This mission was tangible for the French of Shanghai. The implementation of the French school system and particularly the foundation of the Université Aurore allowed for a proselytism of Shanghai’s French culture and identity.

In establishing an understanding of the physical and cultural foundation and development of the French identity manifest and proffered in Shanghai it may be possible to evaluate whether the Concession was “French” as an adjective of character or merely of ownership,

### 4. Methodology and Sources



Conducting this study predominantly through the analysis of French primary source materials, no single source can be found that contains complete information on the development of French identity in the French Concession at Shanghai. Thus, numerous and varied primary sources have been consulted, including diplomatic correspondence, documentation from Shanghai-based interests, articles from the Concession, periodicals concerned with colonial issues, university calendars and Jesuit journals. The testimonials of notable individuals associated with the French community of Shanghai offer an inside perspective on the life and concerns of residents of the Concession which cannot be gleaned from diplomatic archives. While gaps exist in the availability of individual resources, most notably the French-language daily newspaper of the Concession, *L'Echo de Chine* is currently only available in French archives; there is ample information in the sources that are accessible to complete the analysis.

The Treaty of Whampoa describes the original terms and delineation of the French Treaty ports in China.<sup>4</sup> The administration of the Concession and early establishment of community are discussed by Henri Cordier.<sup>5</sup> Finally, French explorer, naturalist and Shanghai Customs Officer, Albert-Auguste Fauvel<sup>6</sup> uses an historical narrative to describe the establishment, infrastructure and administration of the Concession, and details the events in and around the expansion and development of the Concession in its first fifty years.

The positioning of French interest in the city within a political and socio-cultural context is partly addressed by Georges-Gaston Servan de Bézaure, who twice served as French consul-general in Shanghai between 1898 and 1901,<sup>7</sup> and offers insight into the views of the

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<sup>4</sup> *Recueil des traités conclus par la France en Extrême-Orient 1684-1902*. Lucien de Reinach, ed., Paris: E. Leroux, 1902.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Cordier, *Les Origines de deux établissements français dans l'Extrême-Orient, Chang-Hai – Ning-Po*, Paris, 1896.

<sup>6</sup> Albert-Auguste Fauvel, *Histoire de la concession française de Chang-hai (Chine)*, Paris: L. de Soye et fils, 1899.

<sup>7</sup> Georges-Gaston Servan de Bézaure, *La Chine chinoise*, Paris: Plon, 1898; and Georges-Gaston Servan de Bézaure, *Le pays du fleuve bleu*, Paris: Plon, 1899.

administration toward their hosts. Contributions by Eugène Bard,<sup>8</sup> and Edmond Théry,<sup>9</sup> add a traditionally historical and socio-economic look at French relationships with the Chinese, and are fundamental to completing an understanding of the socio-cultural urban dynamic of the French Concession.

The chapter on Shanghai in the travelogue of Gaston Pageot<sup>10</sup> provides an impression of the European spirit of Shanghai, with details of the amenities of European life in the Shanghai of 1908. Aspects of lifestyle for French residents are augmented by an occasional article in the journal *La Quinzaine Coloniale*.<sup>11</sup> Alongside political administration, *La Revue politique et parlementaire: questions politiques, sociales et législatives*<sup>12</sup> demonstrates aspects of social organisation in the French-controlled quarter of the city. The Jesuit journal *Études*,<sup>13</sup> is a rich source of articles and opinion pieces on contemporary events. These articles both report the news of events and pass judgment on the actions taken. Another Jesuit publication, *Relations de Chine*<sup>14</sup>, is dedicated to the mission in China and is particularly strong in articles on education in Shanghai.

Several issues of the *Programme de l'Université Aurore* are consulted for specific information on the French *mission civilisatrice* in education.<sup>15</sup> These sources demonstrate varying viewpoints and different approaches to the city in this period. Yet, all of these sources, through their specific focus and bias, provide characterisations of the essence and structure of the French community of the French Concession at Shanghai.

### **Historiography**

<sup>8</sup> Eugène Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, Paris: A. Colin, 1899; Eugène Bard was *président du Conseil d'administration municipale de la concession française de Shanghai* from 1897 to 1899.

<sup>9</sup> Edmond Théry, *Le Pêril Jaune*, Paris: Juven, 1901.

<sup>10</sup> Gaston Pageot, *A travers les pays jaunes ; suivi d'un itinéraire de croisière*, Paris: Bibliothèque des auteurs modernes, 1909.

<sup>11</sup> *La Quinzaine Coloniale*, [s.n.]: Paris (1897-1914).

<sup>12</sup> *La Revue politique et parlementaire: questions politiques, sociales et législatives*, Paris: Colin (1894-present).

<sup>13</sup> *Études* (par les Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus), Paris: V. Retaux (1897-1940).

<sup>14</sup> *Relations de Chine*. Paris, Compagnie de Jésus, (1903-present).

<sup>15</sup> *Programme de l'Université Aurore*. Shanghai, Université Aurore, 1905, 1908 and 1912.

The secondary sources to cover this topic and period can be divided into three general subject groups: 1) French Overseas Expansion; 2) the French Concession and Shanghai; and 3) the French and the Chinese community. Though each category has a vast repertoire of work focused on it, they will be explored to greater or lesser depth depending on pertinence to the specific topic of this exercise. The volume of existing studies will contribute greatly in the synthesis of the topic at hand and will provide viable support to the primary source analysis. Within the study of France, this unique perspective on government, diplomacy and civilising mission will contribute to our understanding of the French in Shanghai. By selecting an overseas possession that is not a colony or protectorate, and which has been underexplored, there is great opportunity to bring depth and revelation to the study of French imperialism.

The dynamics of political history through the diplomacy involved in the situations that confronted the French Concession between 1900 and 1912, and how these subsequently affected the economic and social realities, provides an opportunity to understand the complexities of this environment. These events had clear impact on the entirety of the foreign community at Shanghai. Political and diplomatic discussion and negotiation over issues native to Shanghai is pertinent to the global historiography of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the pre-war period. The fact that this research has yet to be undertaken compromises what is presently understood about French colonialism and affairs centred in Shanghai.

Sources originating from a variety of themes make up the historiography of this topic. Within the French historiography, contextual subjects, such as the broad objectives and directives of colonial policy and the political imperatives of France will be researched. More specific issues of political, economic and social guidance from France will also be explored. Writings on colonial policy are particularly plentiful and those pertaining to the far Eastern theatre are of greatest value for this topic. There have been dramatic shifts in the historiography of this area of

research over time, to which the current study will also contribute. Historical writings on treaty port and concession life began to appear in the late nineteenth century. The main topics and prejudices of these studies have changed over time from an emphasis on the foreign experience to a focus on the Chinese to a more global view taking both into account.

### **a. French Overseas Expansion**

#### ***French and European imperialism, 1900-1912***

French and European imperialism, in the period 1900-1912, is central to the nature of the French presence in the Concession at Shanghai. The work of Winfried Baumgart provides a strong embarkation point as it provides a survey of imperialism by the two primary players in Shanghai.<sup>16</sup> In this case imperialism is limited to the political notion that it involved the protracted subjugation of a technically inferior territory by a technically superior one, such as in the case of a colony. The focus is on the domestic struggle over imperialism in Britain and France, whether political, ideological or another justification. Baumgart's use of a multi-causal approach to imperialism is also useful from a structural standpoint.

This analysis of overseas activity is continued within a French-focused framework by Susan Bayly.<sup>17</sup> She exhaustively explores the conditions of French Empire from the recommencement of conquest to the resolution of the Algerian Crisis. This offers insight into the policies and actions that affected the Concession at Shanghai. The various ideologies of French colonialism have been revealed in the research of Raoul Girardet.<sup>18</sup> He stresses that it is important to try to understand the sense of the colonial adventure, which cannot be reduced to purely economic imperialism. Girardet talks about the conception of French colonial activity as military, economic, and educational. He identifies that colonisation was not a mass movement but a series of

<sup>16</sup> Winfried Baumgart, *Imperialism: the idea and reality of British and French colonial expansion, 1880-1914*. Trans. by the author and Ben V. Mast. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Bayly, *The French Empire 1830-1962*. London: Longman, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Raoul Girardet, *L'idée coloniale en France: De 1871 à 1962*. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1972.

scattered initiatives, promoted by particular circles. Girardet contributes to the notion that while British colonial policy was inspired by the traders and industrialists, French colonial policy was political and military.

Another recent contribution comes from J.P. Daughton.<sup>19</sup> Daughton takes on the particular case of republicanism and the church at the high point of colonial expansion. The particulars of church and state relations, often contentious, in the singular circumstances of overseas territory are critical to a comprehensive understanding of the French colonial experience. The dynamic of Catholic missionaries affecting colonial policy is applicable to the story of Shanghai, as it was the centre for Jesuit activity in all of China. Daughton points out that after years of conflict, the Catholics and republicans overseas were able to put aside many of their conflicting views by embracing a common notion of French civilisation that brought both sets of ideals together, with compromise of core beliefs on both sides. He adds that the Third Republic's colonial ideology was not intrinsic to revolutionary republican values but was negotiated between religious and secular groups. Finally, Daughton confirms that French colonial enterprise had much to do with creating French identity after 1870. Concluding the look at French imperialism is a series of articles by C.M. Andrew,<sup>20</sup> including a collaboration with A.S. Kanya-Forstner,<sup>21</sup> which delve directly into the constructs of the colonialist movement in France. They deal with the establishment of expansionist ideology in French politics, the lobbying power of the *parti colonial*, and the close relationship with business.

### ***Justification of French colonial policy***

<sup>19</sup> J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> C. M. Andrew, "The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: The Unofficial Mind of Imperialism" in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Ser., Vol. 26, 1976, pp. 143-166; C.M. Andrew, "The French 'Colonial Party': Its Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885-1914." in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1971, pp. 99-128.

<sup>21</sup> C.M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "French Business and the French Colonialists" in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec., 1976), pp. 981-1000.

Justifying French overseas expansion has long been a favourite topic of historians. Since the 1960s competing interpretations have struggled to gain ascendancy in the public consciousness. It was at this time that Henri Brunschwig famously argued that French expansion was not about economic advantage or protectionism, but rather about nationalism and France's self-image.<sup>22</sup> Asserting that overseas expansion was a form of compensation for the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, Brunschwig extends the idea beyond territorial acquisition to cultural propagation, and notes that the policy had broad approval from businessmen, intellectuals and politicians, stating "Unwitting of the problems and evils they were engendering, they had clear consciences."<sup>23</sup> At about the same time, Jean Ganiage<sup>24</sup> brought forward arguments justifying the traditional view of colonial enterprise, in the face of the re-assessment of the ledger taking place in the 1960s. Ganiage presents the main steps of the colonial expansion of France, the objectives and means of action of its supporters. Though largely discredited by later studies, this book holds an important place in the historiography of French justification for colonialism.

Jacques Marseille adds an important economic perspective to this area of research.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that Marseille is an historian before being an economist, but his analysis of the profitability of empire is a key factor in the research of the justifications for French imperialism. In fact, Marseille's key question is whether the colonial adventure was profitable for France. He concludes the answer is an overall 'no'. Among comprehensive studies of the justification for French colonialism, that of Jean Meyer, et al.<sup>26</sup> is an important contribution. This work surveys five centuries of French enterprise, attempting to answer the key questions of motivation with a

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<sup>22</sup> Henri Brunschwig, *French colonialism, 1871-1914: myths and realities*. New York: Praeger, 1966.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167

<sup>24</sup> Jean Ganiage, *L'expansion coloniale de la France sous la Troisième République 1871-1914*. Paris: Payot, 1968.

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme français*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1984.

<sup>26</sup> Jean Meyer, et al. *Histoire de la France coloniale*. Paris: Armand Colin, 1990.

clear and scientific approach. This book takes an approach shaped chronologically and by theme across the different expertise of the contributors.

## **b. The French Concession and Shanghai**

### ***Establishment of European presence and the French Concession***

The European presence in Shanghai began as a direct result of British victory in the First Opium War (1839-1842). The subsequent treaty port system was the focus of scholarship by John Fairbank for several decades.<sup>27</sup> These works place emphasis on diplomatic history; particularly on the negotiations. Fairbank asserts that the signing of the treaties was the pivotal moment in nineteenth century interaction between China and European imperialists. Further noting that the shift in power to the treaty port system both allowed for a form of foreign domination and propped up the weakened Qing Dynasty against internal dissent.<sup>28</sup> Fairbank's work continues to provide valuable insights into the period irrespective of subsequent work and the meta-historical conclusions he draws.

The story of Shanghai, and by extension the effect of foreign presence, is taken up by Linda Johnson. Her work deals with the transformation of Shanghai from an insignificant regional market into the most important of the treaty ports over nearly a thousand years of history.<sup>29</sup> Much of the book sets the historical scene of the Chinese city of Shanghai, but the end, dealing with the foreign arrival and impact, is particularly useful as a backdrop to the establishment of the French Concession.

Bryna Goodman uses the celebration of fifty years of British presence in Shanghai (1893) to expand on the dynamics of the relationship between the International Settlement community

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<sup>27</sup> John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast. The Opening of the Treaty Ports (1842-1854)*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953; and John K. Fairbank, "The creation of the Treaty System" in *The Cambridge History of China, volume 10, Late Ch'ing China 1800-1911, Part 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 213-263.

<sup>28</sup> John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy...*, p. 465.

<sup>29</sup> Linda C. Johnson, *Shanghai: From Market Town to Treaty Port, 1074-1858*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

and the Chinese population.<sup>30</sup> By offering a history of this event, with detailed discussion of Chinese participation, Goodman illuminates the murky question of semi-colonialism in China, and exposes some of the social and political ambiguities of foreign presence in Shanghai.

Jean Fredet produced a work on Charles de Montigny, the catalyst for early French involvement in China and first consul at Shanghai, which provides insight into the earliest concepts of French presence and the great importance of the religious mission.<sup>31</sup> Jacques Prioux provided an analysis of the role of the French Concession at Shanghai in opening China to the West.<sup>32</sup> Looking at economic and cultural factors, he analyses the place of the French Concession in the importation of Western ideas into China.

### *Manifestations of French Concession community and identity*

Distinct elements of French community and identity in the French Concession of Shanghai are made evident by both looking directly at aspects of the French presence and in comparison with the other communities of the region, particularly the British. Frances Wood provides a volume detailing treaty port life in China.<sup>33</sup> While not specific to Shanghai, that city does provide examples, and many aspects of foreign life were common to the various port cities. Wood is predominantly concerned with the British experience, providing a factual narrative using colourful descriptions of daily life, but does make comparisons to the French for continuity and contrast, which are particularly useful for analysing the French community.

<sup>30</sup> Bryna Goodman, "Improvisations on a Semicolonial Theme, or, How to Read a Celebration of Transnational Urban Community" in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (November, 2000), pp. 889-926.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Fredet, *Quand la Chine s'ouvrait...Charles de Montigny, consul de France*. Paris: Ste de l'histoire des colonies francaises, 1953.

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Prioux, *La Concession française de Changhai: ouverture de la Chine aux occidentaux*. Académie européenne du livre, 1993.

<sup>33</sup> Frances Wood, *No dogs and not many Chinese: treaty port life in China 1843-1943*. London: John Murray, 1998.



A further analysis of foreign community and identity, which reflects aspects of the French experience, is Albert Feuerwerker's general survey of the foreign establishment in China.<sup>34</sup> In this work the author takes on the main aspects of foreign establishment in the early twentieth century; one by one, ministers and consuls, missionaries, Maritime Customs, Post Office, Salt Administration, economic interests, adventurers, advisers and journalists. Though he makes little use of primary sources, Feuerwerker is able to compile various facts about the foreign establishment into a picture of community and identity. Another view of the foreign community from which representations of the French may be drawn comes from Meng Yue.<sup>35</sup> Focused on the rise of the importance of cities in China, Meng looks specifically at Shanghai during the final decades of the Qing dynasty. She explores how it became the crux of cross-cultural contact between foreign imperialists and Chinese, and the dynamic results this situation produced. Meng downplays the impact of foreign presence in modifying changes in the urban structure of Shanghai. The examination of such cultural practices as the work of the commercial press, street theatre, and literary arts, allow insight into the nature of cultural interaction in the French Concession.

### ***Organisation of the French Concession***

The first fifty years of the Concession are detailed in the work of Henri Cordier.<sup>36</sup> The focus is on the development and administration of the Concession and specific relations to the French community. Charles Maybon and Jean Fredet collaborated on a history of the French Concession comprehensively detailing specifics of development from establishment to 1900. The attitude of the authors may best be summed in the concluding remarks of this volume by Fredet, "and we have to remember that what we must today defend is not only our rights, our institutions, our

<sup>34</sup> Albert Feuerwerker, *The Foreign Establishment in China in the Early Twentieth Century*. Ann Arbor: The University of California Press, Michigan, 1976.

<sup>35</sup> Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empire*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Henri Cordier, *Les Origines....*

moral and material interests, our very lives; it is also our sacred heritage, made up of heroism (often obscure), of labour, of sweat and blood, which has been left to us by those who went before. With such a thought, we have hope for the future.”<sup>37</sup>

Guy Brossollet has retold the story of one hundred years of French presence in Shanghai.<sup>38</sup> Skewing toward the story of the French Concession as a place protected from war and revolution, Brossollet projects Shanghai as one of those rare places where cultures intersected, wealth and talent were exchanged, and substantive differences and affinities mingled. This presentation of the French of Shanghai can be used to form part of the story of interaction between the French Concession and the Third Republic.

### **c. The French and the Chinese Community**

#### ***Cultural interactions with the Chinese***

Cultural interaction with the local community was always a curiosity of the coloniser. The activities of missionaries, who had the greatest degree of contact with local people, is fertile ground for this analysis. Maurice Thomas Price produced a study looking at the reactions of the Chinese people to the overtures of the missionaries.<sup>39</sup> Price’s book attempts to take a factual, analytical approach of the data that was available at the time, without prejudice. It points the way to an understanding of the implications of missions to local communities, and, therefore, to the interaction between the local population and encroaching French. Picking up on this theme is editor Daniel Bays.<sup>40</sup> Divided into four thematic sections, this collection of essays is not focused on the missionary experience, but rather on the roles and dynamics of Christianity as it functioned within Chinese society. The general idea of this book is that Christianity was much

<sup>37</sup> C.B. Maybon and Jean Fredet. *Histoire de la Concession française de Changhai*. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1929, p. 404.

<sup>38</sup> Guy Brossollet, *Les français de Shanghai, 1849-1949*. Paris: Belin, 1999.

<sup>39</sup> Maurice Thomas Price, *Christian missions and oriental civilizations: a study in culture contact*. Shanghai: Priv. Print, 1924.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel H. Bays, ed., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

more significant in the Chinese culture of the period than is generally thought. Thus Christianity is interpreted as both a Western religion that imposed itself on China, and one that was becoming a Chinese religion. This view is particularly valuable in ascertaining the religious component of French relations with the Chinese community in the Concession environment. More recent historical articles on the development of the modern university by Ruth Hayhoe<sup>41</sup> and the modifications to the broader Jesuit mission over the centuries in China by Jean-Paul Wiest<sup>42</sup> offer context to the *mission civilisatrice* in education in Shanghai.

Some decades ago, Teng Ssu-yü and John Fairbank provided an account of how China's leaders reacted to the encroachment of Western arms and goods, individuals and ideas.<sup>43</sup> Spanning nearly one hundred years of significant influence and change, they look at the impact of specific aspects of Western civilisations upon Chinese traditions. They trace the process by which Chinese officials came to realise the need for Western arms to defend themselves, Western technology for making arms, modern science to support technology, its application in modern industry to strengthen the economy, and new ideas which ultimately led to great movements for institutional reform, political revolution, and ideological reconstruction.

Mark Elvin and William Skinner's collection of essays on the circumstances of the Chinese caught between their traditions and the encroaching Western values includes some useful contributions on Shanghai.<sup>44</sup> Three of the essays, dealing with treaty port modernisation, the Chinese merchant class in Shanghai and the administration of Shanghai, respectively, are

<sup>41</sup> Ruth Hayhoe. "Towards the Forging of a Chinese University Ethos: Zhendan and Fudan, 1903-1919" in *The China Quarterly*, no 94, (June 1983).

<sup>42</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest. "Bringing Christ to the Nations: Shifting Models of Mission among Jesuits in China" in *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (Oct., 1997).

<sup>43</sup> Teng Ssu-yü and John K. Fairbank, *China's response to the West: a documentary survey, 1839-1923*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954.

<sup>44</sup> Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds., *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

particularly pertinent.<sup>45</sup> In each, relationships between Chinese and Westerners are dealt with in different context, and can be used to contribute to a picture of Sino-French interaction. An assessment of the vital role of native place associations in the development of modern Chinese society in Shanghai is provided by Bryna Goodman.<sup>46</sup> She focuses on the role of native-place identity in the development of urban nationalism, as immigrants from other Chinese provinces dominated the population of Shanghai forming native-place associations, which flourished and had a profound effect on city life, social order and urban and national identity, and relationships with the French of the Concession.

In an article on the modernity and openness of society in the international sections of Shanghai during the late Qing dynasty, Catherine Yeh focuses on the lifestyle of Chinese intellectuals, who migrated to the city in pursuit of opportunities for freedom and education.<sup>47</sup> The lives of four such intellectuals are used to illustrate the tensions existing between the modernised and private Chinese identities of these figures engaged in cultural transition. In a subsequent book, Catherine Yeh focuses on the Shanghai courtesan in the context of the international territories.<sup>48</sup> She explores the Shanghai entertainment world at the close of the Qing dynasty, and challenges the conceptualisation of Shanghai in terms of colonialism or cultural imperialism, stating that “such an approach obscures the true dynamism of the city and is self-defeating, because there was much mixing and fusing among different cultural traditions.”<sup>49</sup> Instead, she suggests that the status of the foreign community was a hybrid one. In his memoir

<sup>45</sup> Susan Mann Jones. “The Ningpo Pang and Financial Power at Shanghai” in *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*. Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974; Rhoades Murphey. “The Treaty Ports and China’s Modernization” in *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*. Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974; Edward J.M. Rhoads. “Merchant Associations in Canton, 1895-1911” in *The Chinese City between Two Worlds*. Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

<sup>46</sup> Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation. Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937*. Berkeley: University of China Press, 1995.

<sup>47</sup> Catherine Vance Yeh, “The Life-Style of Four Wenren in Late Qing Shanghai” in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (December, 1997), pp. 419-470.

<sup>48</sup> Catherine Vance Yeh, *Shanghai love: courtesans, intellectuals, and entertainment culture, 1850-1910*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

de maitrise, Michael Fiaux attempts to show that the creation and development of modern Shanghai (post-Opium War) was the result of the unplanned action of a predominantly European merchant class.<sup>50</sup> In this effort he outlines various types of relationship between European and Chinese communities, which are useful in placing the French Concession within a broader concession-era Shanghai context. Ultimately, it provides a survey that attempts to summarise the conditions that emerged in and due to the foreign concessions of Shanghai over their century.

Much of the first volume on the history of China since the Opium Wars, by Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid and Marie-Claire Bergère, deals explicitly with the interaction of the Chinese community with French interests in East Asia.<sup>51</sup> This English-language compendium, derived from previous French-language writings, brings together some of the best work of the three authors, and allows for a confident assessment of factors of consequence for the French during China's tumultuous transition.

Unabashedly looking at the Chinese theatre from a French perspective, Jacques Weber makes a key contribution on the effect of the Chinese on the French presence.<sup>52</sup> While not specific to Shanghai, Weber frequently cites the situation at Shanghai with an eye to the broader context of French imperatives throughout the region.

### *Pertinent aspect of Chinese History, 1900-1912*

A general overview of concession-era Shanghai is offered in the popular history authored by Stella Dong.<sup>53</sup> Though no new theoretical insight or information is offered, Dong's depiction of the arrogance and excess of the foreigners, within the overlapping cosmopolitan worlds of trade, sin, politics, play, and money, offers an easily accessible backdrop. A more well-rounded

<sup>50</sup> Michael Fiaux, *La présence étrangère à Shanghai (1843-1943)*. Mémoire, Université de Lausanne, 1999.

<sup>51</sup> Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid and Marie-Claire Bergère, *China: From the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution*. Trans. Anne Destenay, New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.

<sup>52</sup> Jacques Weber, *La France en Chine (1843-1943)*. Nantes: Ouest Editions, 1997.

<sup>53</sup> Stella Dong, *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City, 1842-1949*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001.

view of the macro-history of Shanghai is offered by Marie-Claire Bergère.<sup>54</sup> Her book aims to answer the fundamental question of the role played by Shanghai in the formation of modern China up to the dawn of the twenty-first century. To this end, she details the period of the foreign concessions and the development of the hybrid Chinese metropolis of the period. Her focus is always on the city itself, with a bias toward the Chinese perspective, providing a counter-balance to the many Western-centred studies.

Of the numerous events to occur throughout China during the study period, none had a greater impact on China's international image than the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901). It had a profound effect on the attitudes of foreign nations toward China and altered perspectives for foreign and Chinese communities about each other. This dynamic was strongly evident in Shanghai and forms an important component of the relationship between the French and the Chinese community. Raymond Bourgerie and Pierre Lesouef provide a history of the event, skewed slightly toward a French perspective.<sup>55</sup> Deliberately eschewing a detailed discussion of the best known part of the conflict, the fifty-five days in Beijing, they try to present the breadth of conflict and complexity involved, such as how the excesses of territorial concessions, and the abuses associated with foreign administration, perhaps, made armed conflict inevitable. Another perspective on this event is offered in the essay collection of Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann.<sup>56</sup> Contributors to this work explore root causes, examine its impact on China, foreign imperialism and the foreign imagination. The common thread is that this rebellion was a wholly modern resistance to globalising power, representing new trends in modern China and international relations, rather than a rejection of modern ideas.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Economic Relations***

<sup>54</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, *Histoire de Shanghai*. Paris: Fayard, 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Raymond Bourgerie and Pierre Lesouef, *La guerre des boxers (1900-1901): Tseu-hi évite le pire*. Economica, 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Bickers and R.G. Tiedemann, eds., *The Boxers, China, and the World*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

As trade was the primary reason for foreign presence in Shanghai, economic relations between the communities played an important role in defining identity. Wellington Chan offers a study of the impact of Western merchants on the traditional practice of commerce endorsed by Chinese mandarins.<sup>58</sup> He cites the tension between Chinese merchants and these officials, as the former sought to emulate the success being achieved by their Western counterparts.

Along a similar theme is the work of Hao Yen-p'ing, which initially offers a systematic and detailed analysis of the structure of relations within Sino-Western trade, and moves on to look at the processes by which trade was expanded.<sup>59</sup> Most examples and anecdotes use the British as the example of Western business, but there is enough reference to the conditions of the French to make aspects of this work useful.

Taking the economic relationship from a different perspective is Sherman Cochran's collection of works on the commercial culture of Shanghai.<sup>60</sup> The contributors agree that during the early twentieth century China's commercial culture was centered in the private sector, in the concession areas, but they differ over whether foreign influence was decisive in the creation of the commercial culture. The first two essays, which deal with developments from 1900 to 1920, are particularly useful, though not definitive. Looking at commerce in this light is pertinent to a global understanding of economic relationships between the French and Chinese invested in Shanghai.

### ***Approach and Contribution***

In merging the histories of French imperialism and the Concession of Shanghai in the first dozen years of the twentieth century, there is a rich vein of resources for each. However, nothing

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<sup>58</sup> Wellington K.K. Chan, *Merchants, Mandarins and Modern Enterprise in late Ch'ing China*. Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, 1977.

<sup>59</sup> Hao Yen-p'ing, *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth Century China. The Rise of Sino-Western Mercantile Capitalism*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986.

<sup>60</sup> Sherman Cochran, ed., *Inventing Nanjing Road. Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1999.

substantial links all of these areas, making it necessary to infer the relationships through analysis. Each has a broad historiography of its own, with seminal works and fruitful arguments. Useful contributions begin with contemporary discourse and continue to the present. The study of the development of French identity in the Concession at Shanghai demands an investigation of political, economic and cultural themes. The result being a new contribution that can find a place in the historiography of any of the areas mentioned above.

## 5. Plan of the Thesis

This paper is organised to present the nature of the “Paris of the East” nickname, identity and consequence of Shanghai through self-conception and the dynamic relationships with the International Settlement and the Chinese population during a period of political crises. To aid analysis, it is broken up into three major sections, each dealing with one of the key questions enumerated above, to best present evidence and arguments, and to deliver clear answers. Organised thematically, topics are given as evidence of the development and impact of the French identity of the concession at Shanghai on the physical characteristics of the city; the social structures of the foreign community; and the influence on Chinese life.

Chapter one deals with the origins of the French Concession and traces the source of the “Paris of the East” identity of Shanghai. By necessity this will include the historical background, prior to the study period, and will consider the pressures exerted by the other communities on the French image. The second chapter deals with the French cultural identity and the validity of the conception of Shanghai as a French city. Activities undertaken under the *mission civilisatrice* are dealt with in Chapter three, looking particularly at French involvement in education. Each chapter is divided into sub-sections that deal with specific subjects, periods or events.



## CHAPTER I – The French Façade: building a ‘corner of Europe’ in Shanghai

After six years as an open port, the establishment of concession rights, in 1848, precipitated the rapid growth of both the economy and population of the foreign settlements in Shanghai. Once trade had been established, the advantages of a permanent presence began to increase in appeal. Several coastal cities of China were opened to residence through the concession system; most notable among these was Shanghai. Shanghai, referred to as the ‘Whore of the Orient’, was to become infamous in the 1920s and 1930s, but how was it that the city was also nicknamed the ‘Paris of the East’?

The amalgamation of the British and American concessions into the new International Settlement in 1863 left France with the only national concession in the city. It was modern and aesthetically attractive, requiring territorial enlargement on several occasions. The French Concession was the most desirable part of the city to take up residence. Yet, this understanding was largely superficial. In the period 1900 to 1912, modernisation and structural development continued in the French Concession, business volume justified the overseas possession and the *mission civilisatrice* was conducted in earnest from the Jesuit Centre at Xujiahui with government sanction.

The early development of the French Concession, alongside the International Settlement and Chinese administered communities, in areas including economic, political, and cultural expansion will elaborate the myth of the Paris of the East and provide evidence of the Shanghai that existed behind the ‘mask of Marianne’. As China moved toward the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the Chinese Republic the next year, the challenges of French influence over the French Concession and the broader community of Shanghai became more apparent. And while the above nickname would persist until the end of the concession-era, it was clearly not indicative of the power balance. Economy, infrastructure and institutions illuminate

the conditions under which influence and power were exerted in the Shanghai theatre and expose the myth of the 'French' city of China.

The French façade refers to the aesthetic and superficial factors that contributed to the conferring of the "Paris of the East" moniker for Shanghai. Building a "corner of Europe" in Shanghai borrows a line from the travelogue of French writer Gaston Pageot, who describes the tree-lined boulevards and familiar architecture found in the French Concession with that characterisation. This analysis does not, however, go beyond perception and appearance.

The central problem to be researched in this chapter is: how Shanghai acquired and maintained the image of a French metropolis while actual influence did not suggest the conferring of this reputation. This chapter will be conducted in three major veins: 1) the rationale and execution of the French settlement; 2) the manifestations of French Shanghai, particularly in aesthetics, economic presence and institutions; and 3) an examination of the power structure in Shanghai to peek behind the façade of the French image of Shanghai. This provides a framework to identify the origin and persistence of the idea that Shanghai was a 'French' city; and to reveal the actual situation for the foreigners and Chinese living within the urban expanse.

### **1. Cornerstones of the Paris of the East**

Following the decisive British victory in the first Opium War (1839-1842) the Western Powers wasted no time establishing their presence in Shanghai. The first British consul, George Balfour, declared Shanghai open for business on 17 November 1843. The French dispatched Théodore de Lagrené to negotiate the treaty of Whampoa, signed on 24 October 1844.<sup>61</sup> A member of the delegation, Charles de Montigny, was installed as the first French consul-general of the treaty port.<sup>62</sup> The Americans also concluded a treaty in 1844. Each of the three foreign

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<sup>61</sup> *Recueil des traités...*, p. 22-47.

<sup>62</sup> Also first consul of Tianjin, 1863-1868.

powers were granted similar terms in trade rights and customs duties, and were now permitted to reside, lease and buy property, and operate businesses in the treaty ports. Capitalising on China's weakness, the British, French and Americans were able to demand extraterritoriality rights be included in the treaties, which meant that foreign nationals would be subject only to the laws of their own government as enforced by the consul.

Their political power was backed by the provision that foreign warships could anchor in any of the treaty ports or any other port if trade interests required it. The Chinese strategy had always been to contain the foreigners, to keep them to a few ports on the coast and limit their influence, but one of the provisions of the Treaty of Whampoa, Article XXII, would open China even wider.<sup>63</sup> This clause in the French treaty set the precedent for the expansion of Treaty Ports into foreign concessions.

It is significant that foreign presence in China took the form of concessions as this differs from the other common forms of imperial administration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to international law definitions a concession is a territory within a country that is administered by another entity than the state that holds sovereignty over it. This is usually a colonising power.<sup>64</sup> With a colony the imperialist nation formally takes over an area and claims full sovereignty, governing it as part of the metropole. In the case of a protectorate, a native ruler remains in power, but cedes most control to the imperialist nation behind the scenes. In a mandate, one country takes temporary control of another as a result of a war. In southern China, France held a sphere of influence, which meant taking control of economic privileges from the host nation in the affected region.

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix for the text of Article XXII of the Treaty of Whampoa.

<sup>64</sup> *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*, 1997.

The foreign governments empowered consuls to deal directly with Chinese administrators, a provision established in the treaty agreements.<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that Shanghai was a long-established regional trading hub in China, having shown importance as a commercial center dating from the Yuan dynasty,<sup>66</sup> though the great prosperity of the city only dates to the arrival of the foreigners.<sup>67</sup> As a key port in the transport of northern goods, Shanghai was integral in the Chinese coastal trade system, “by the time Shanghai was formally opened as a treaty port in 1842, it was a rich commercial city with a population of about 270 000.”<sup>68</sup>

In the concession terms the French consul negotiated the boundaries and lease of the concession territory, which was originally defined as:

On the south a part of the moat along the city wall; on the north the Yangkingpang; on the east the river side from the Canton Guild to the Yangkingpang; on the west from the creek named after the war god's temple, Kuan-ti Miao, up to the Bridge of the Chow family; subject to further extension if desired.<sup>69</sup>

The port concessions were designed to dominate the regional economy, as a form of economic imperialism in lieu of full-colonisation.<sup>70</sup> The Chinese scholar Zheng Guanying was aware of this insidious threat and warned his countrymen, “being swallowed up by troops is a disaster men perceive easily, [but] conquest by commerce envelops the nation invisibly.”<sup>71</sup> By 1850, the French Concession already had greater trade volume than Guangzhou, the original port of trade with China for foreigners.

The various foreign communities pursued common aims by organising a council of ratepayers in 1854 – responsible for roads, street-lights, the police force and infrastructure.<sup>72</sup> In response to re-organisation talks, the *Conseil Municipal* of the French Concession was created on

<sup>65</sup> Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*..., p. 37.

<sup>66</sup> The Yuan Dynasty ruled China from 1271 to 1368.

<sup>67</sup> Cordier, *Les Origines*..., p. iii.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, “The Ningpo Pang...”, p. 74.

<sup>69</sup> Graham Earnshaw, *Tales of Old Shanghai*. Hong Kong: Earnshaw Books, 2008, p. 18; see period maps in Appendix.

<sup>70</sup> Murphey, “The Treaty Ports ...”, pp. 17-18.

<sup>71</sup> Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi weiyuan*. Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1895, p. 681; see Appendix for an excerpt of another of Zheng's influential essays on Western economic strength.

<sup>72</sup> Wood, *No dogs*..., p. 59.

13 May 1862, with all decisions subject to the approval or veto of the consul. The re-organisation negotiations continued and resulted in the creation of the International Settlement on 21 September 1863 by the amalgamation of the British and American concessions; the French declined to join, fearing domination by the English-speaking majority. While the International Settlement had the characteristics of a free port, the French Concession operated more like a colonial enclave managed by the metropolitan government.<sup>73</sup> This is significant in the early establishment of the French identity for Shanghai, as French interest was not diluted in an international context.

Bordered to the north by the International Settlement and to the east by the Huangpu River, expansion possibilities were limited. The French territory was extended south and west a total of four times, in 1863, 1881, 1900, and 1914. The first expansion was to accommodate dramatic population growth, largely due to an influx of Chinese residents. This brought the Ningbo Guild House and cemetery into the French zone. The extension at the turn of century brought the boundary in the direction of the Jesuit Centre at Xujiahui – which would be included in the Concession after 1914.

Internal and external factors contributed to the development of French identity through the first fifty years of foreign presence in Shanghai. By 1900 the French identity of Shanghai was evident in the aesthetics of the Concession, economic installations, institutions and infrastructure. With mechanisms in place to create and display the best of French culture, Shanghai was becoming a corner of Europe in Asia. This combination of factors is the naissance of Shanghai as the Paris of East.

## **2. Manifestations of French Shanghai**

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<sup>73</sup> Bergère. *Histoire de Shanghai*, p. 131.

Always less populated than the International Settlement, the French worked hard to maintain their influence in Shanghai and China. While French presence included a cultural policy, much of the influence was gained and maintained through economic means. “C’est sans doute parce que la politique culturelle apparaît moins comme une fin en soi que comme un moyen pour servir les deux ambitions propres à toute œuvre colonisatrice que sont la domination politique et la domination économique.”<sup>74</sup>

A testament to this primacy is that the vibrant economy in Shanghai was responsible for three-fifths of French economic involvement in China. French pride in their economic presence is illustrated in the journals of the day, “aussi notre colonie de Changhaï devient-elle chaque jour plus prospère et prend-elle un essor marqué par une floraison d’entreprises qui font le plus grand honneur à nos compatriotes.”<sup>75</sup> For example, the primary silk markets were located in Shanghai and Guangzhou, with France, Switzerland, Italy and the United States as the largest customers. Though London once held a monopoly, Lyon, Zurich and Milan had become the most prominent distribution centres and the majority of silk inspectors were French, “c’est grâce au commerce de la soie qu’un mouvement d’émigration de jeunes Français intelligents et bien préparés s’est dessiné vers l’Extrême-Orient.”<sup>76</sup> French financial institutions and business practices were installed, as overseas business interests held confidence that eventually the ‘backward’ Chinese merchants would emulate their system. In this effort, the French were in direct competition with the other colonial powers, who were working from the same premise. It is worth noting that it was no great accomplishment to dominate the Chinese economy, as the national budget of China

<sup>74</sup> Weber, *La France en Chine*, p. 103.

<sup>75</sup> *Bulletin de la Société de géographie commerciale de Paris*, Tome 24, Paris: Société de géographie commerciale, 1902, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 213.

was less than that of Paris alone, it was the other foreign powers that provided the real competition.<sup>77</sup>

The French Concession represented the best of French technology, “A la fin du siècle la qualité des infrastructures de Shanghai égale ou presque celle des grandes villes européennes ou américaines.”<sup>78</sup> The Concession had electric streetlights while most towns in France were still using gas; the *Conseil Municipal* launched and managed an electric company, police force and sanitation services; roads, professional buildings and houses echoed French style and techniques;<sup>79</sup> French engineers and city planners maintained the continental feel of the surroundings; J.J. Chollot, Chief Engineer of the Concession (1893-1907), was responsible for the planning and execution of the first tramline at the request of Consul Ratard;<sup>80</sup> the French Concession was well-appointed with gardens and parks to enhance the familiarity of the environment for French nationals. In 1908 a French visitor, Gaston Pageot, after travelling around the city, equates walking through the French Concession with returning to France.<sup>81</sup>

The appearance of French ascendancy was further manifest by the institutions established in Shanghai, including the political administration, the chamber of commerce, the Université Aurore and other schools. The French Concession of Shanghai remained independent to pursue the interests of the French state and business. This situation created three distinct administrative zones in Shanghai – Chinese, French and International. Despite British dominance, the International Settlement was nonetheless an amalgam of ideas and identities, whereas the French Concession provided for a concerted French identity, resulting in the suggestion of a dominant French presence, only rivalled by the seemingly homogenous Chinese interest, though within the

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<sup>77</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 241.

<sup>78</sup> Bergère, *Histoire de Shanghai*, p. 103.

<sup>79</sup> Brossollet, *Les Français de Shanghai*, p. 21.

<sup>80</sup> The tramline opened in 1906.

<sup>81</sup> Pageot, *A travers les pays jaunes...*, p. 127.

sphere of foreign interest, Chinese imperatives were inconsequential. The decision to leave ultimate power in the hands of the consul-general, with the *Conseil Municipal* acting as an advisory arm, allowed for a decisiveness of action that was not possible from the other administrations.

As the Concession had an origin and purpose based largely on economic factors, the Chamber of Commerce played a critical role in the character of identity. Through its collective power it became a body of French influence, imposing a measurable linguistic and cultural impact on the Chinese business class. The strength of all the foreign chambers was observed and understood by the Chinese. In 1901, the newly appointed Imperial Commissioner for Revision of the Commercial Treaties, Sheng Xuanhuai reported,

In Shanghai the foreign chambers of commerce are as numerous as the trees in the forest. They meet night and day and spare no effort to their discussions and researches. But Chinese merchants have never had a consultative guild. Although each guild has its own directors, each has its own territory so they are scattered rather than united.<sup>82</sup>

With help from French and British merchants, the Chinese were able to organise their own Western-style Chamber by the middle of the decade.

The establishment of educational institutions was another cornerstone of French Shanghai. The first French Jesuit school opened at Xujiahui in 1850. By 1886 the *École Municipale* had been established to teach French and Chinese students, extending the reach of French culture in the city. The opening of the Université Aurore was seen as a means of exerting influence and representing the French *mission civilisatrice*. In a series of articles in issues of *Revue politique et parlementaire* in 1903, debate raged over whether church involvement in the school would be detrimental to the spread of French language and culture.<sup>83</sup> In the same journal support for the

<sup>82</sup> Sheng Xuanhuai. *Sheng shangshu Yuzhai cunqao chukan*. [Collected drafts of Board President Sheng Yuzhai, first draft]. juan 7:35a-37b.

<sup>83</sup> *Revue politique et parlementaire*..., Tmes 35-38, pp. 326-330.



creation of a Faculty of Medicine at the university was expressed and hailed as a means of promoting French interests in the Chinese community.<sup>84</sup>

Following on the success of Université Aurore, a secular institution, the Collège Municipal Français, was established in 1911. Though never as influential as Aurore, it extended French influence and gave a non-religious face to the French presence in educational institutions. The French administration took the role of education overseas seriously, “La gouvernement français lui-même doit se doter de structures d’encadrement. Un premier pas est fait en 1910 avec la création du Bureau des écoles et des Œuvres françaises a l’étranger.”<sup>85</sup>

The cornerstones of the French aesthetic – architecture, parks, public spaces and recreational areas – were established so that many parts of the Concession could not be distinguished from France on appearance alone. A large economic interest supported by an administration with the political freedom to execute the French agenda, and several educational facilities geared towards extending French influence among the Chinese, suggested an administrative advantage for the French in Shanghai. Each of these factors contributed to the creation of the “Paris of the East” understanding of Shanghai, the notion that this modern metropolis was, in fact, French.

### **3. Shanghai Behind the Façade**

The French Concession and International Settlement did hold certain aspects in common. After fifty years, both communities were beginning to identify themselves with the city. The emergence of self-referential nicknames such as ‘Shanghailander’ and ‘Old Shanghai-hand’ was indicative of the attachment felt for their community.<sup>86</sup> This shared notion of belonging points to the serious inconsistencies in the reputation of Shanghai as a French city. For the economy and

<sup>84</sup> *Revue politique et parlementaire*.... Tomes 35-38, pp. 97-104.

<sup>85</sup> Weber, *La France en Chine*, p. 106.

<sup>86</sup> Bergère, *Histoire de Shanghai*, p. 96.

political power it can be shown that interests other than French provided the body, if not the face, of the city.

The British were the dominant economic force and the Municipal Council of the International Settlement was the dominant political force. The merging of foreign and Chinese within concession territory was unique to Shanghai as the other open ports reserved those areas for foreign habitation.<sup>87</sup> The International Settlement housed the greatest numbers of foreign and total residents. The companies based there had the largest capital investment. In the context of the economic imperialism that governed foreign presence in China economic superiority was central to any other form of influence.

The International Settlement maintained a significant police force and the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. Other stakeholders, such as the Americans and Germans (and later the Japanese) used the power of the International Settlement to exert influence in their respective spheres. The prevalence of the English language helped American business, and the strong economy helped the Germans support their other far eastern colonial enterprises, notably Jiaozhou Bay on the north-eastern coast of China. A revelatory anecdote of the life of the foreign community is that nothing besides rickshaw or sampan hire was ever paid for in cash, including the collection at church. The fact that some sinophiles became knowledgeable about the Chinese scene, learning something of the language and culture, even made Chinese friends, does not lessen the reality that for most foreigners it was a familiar lifestyle in unfamiliar surroundings.<sup>88</sup>

The competing and complementary interests of the French and the rest of the international community provided a dynamic of rivalry and co-operation. In fact, French direction and ambition was frequently filtered through the relationship with these other powers on an issue to

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<sup>87</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 265.

<sup>88</sup> Feuerwerker, *The Foreign Establishment...*, p. 5.

issue basis. As France was always the weak sister, any course of action had to consider accordingly.

It has been suggested that cultural policy was less of an end in itself than a means to serve the true double ambition for opening all colonies, that is, political and economic domination.<sup>89</sup> The Chinese made up the vast majority of the residents in the city, and the Chinese who lived outside the Concessions had much lower standard of living, but constituted the bulk of the work force. Those who lived within the Concessions were part of a new and developing segment of the population who were designated to be the local agents in the redevelopment of China along Western lines in trade, finance, transport, industry, politics, and ideology, modeled on British systems.<sup>90</sup> These wealthier members of the Chinese business class were critical to the economic development of Shanghai. It should be noted that these individuals were not to be considered wealthy by European standards.

A Shanghai, où se trouvent un grand nombre de Chinois dits riches, nous n'en connaissons pas un seul qui vaille 10 millions de francs. La plupart des riches, et ils ne se comptent pas par centaines, flottent entre 500 000 francs et 2 millions. Beaucoup sont considérés comme riches qui sont bien au-dessous du premier chiffre.<sup>91</sup>

It was the Chinese middle-class that kept order in the society. They operated shops, provided skilled labour and formed the bulk of the police force. The Chinese of Shanghai had a profound effect on the practical composition of the city.

After some struggle with local magistrates to allow its creation, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce was created and housed in the International Settlement. The proximity to the engine of the Western economic interest caused the Chinese business leaders to realise their economic power. In 1905 an anti-American boycott was launched by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce

<sup>89</sup> Weber, *La France en Chine*, p. 103.

<sup>90</sup> Murphey, "The Treaty Ports...", p. 20.

<sup>91</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 241.

as a show of political force.<sup>92</sup> A marginal consequence was an increase in trade with French businesses and new interrelationship with the French economy. Aware of this power and influenced by other aspects of western thought and philosophy, notably that of France, the Chinese Chamber was agitating for economic and political reforms by the eve of the 1911 revolution.<sup>93</sup> The economic power structure demonstrates that with Britain on top and the Chinese occupying a position of increasing power and providing critical services, French influence on this aspect of city life was peripheral. Shanghai certainly did not operate as a French economy. French goods were available, but English business interests dominated the economy, “la Concession française n’est pas importante pour son commerce, qui est faible, ou par ses industries, qui sont négligeable.”<sup>94</sup>

The office of French consul-general was occupied by six different men between 1900 and 1912, and only one of these for a period exceeding two years.<sup>95</sup> French consul-general to Shanghai was a political appointment that was subject to frequent change, owing to the instability of successive cabinets in Paris. This volatility prohibited the establishment of a strong French political policy in dealing with the other foreign and Chinese administrations.

The Boxer Rebellion, an anti-imperialist and anti-Christian movement started by peasant farmers in Shandong Province, altered relationships with the Chinese and within the foreign community.<sup>96</sup> With the tacit approval of the Qing government, the Boxers attacked and destroyed foreign installations between Shandong and Beijing in an attempt to force the foreign powers out of the country with a siege of the diplomatic district of the capital.<sup>97</sup> During the uprising, two

<sup>92</sup> Rhoads, “Merchant Associations...”, p. 108.

<sup>93</sup> Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State and Local Elites in Republican China: Merchant Organizations and Politics in Shanghai, 1890-1930*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, p. 37.

<sup>94</sup> Laurent Metzger, *Les lauriers de Shanghai: des concessions internationales à la métropole moderne*. Geneva: Editions Olizane, 1999, p. 32.

<sup>95</sup> Louis Ratard was consul-general for eight years (1901-1909).

<sup>96</sup> Bickers and Tiedemann, *The Boxers...*

<sup>97</sup> Henri Cordier, *La Révolution en Chine: Les Origines*. Leide: E.J. Brill, 1900.

hundred foreign missionaries and 32 000 Chinese Christians were killed. The siege of Beijing forced the intervention of a joint expedition of eight foreign powers.<sup>98</sup> Upon securing victory the foreign troops engaged in pillaging and desecration of the Chinese capital. The measures imposed in treaty provisions, including the prohibition of Chinese within certain areas of their own capital, further inflamed anti-foreign sentiment.

The initial success of the Boxers prompted fears of similar movements against Christians and foreigners in other parts of the country. This affected Shanghai's French community, administrators of the largest Catholic centre in China. The fear of a Boxer attack had a homogenising effect on the foreign community of Shanghai, though this was notably absent among the combined military force in the north. France's participation in the victorious campaign, restored security, and the pride of another military success legitimised feelings of superiority over the Chinese, while reinforcing the reality of military inferiority to other foreign powers.

#### 4. Conclusion

The French face of Shanghai was strongly influenced by its political setting between the Chinese administration and International Settlement. Certainly the interaction between these three communities shaped perception in all quarters. In the period preceding the First World War France had a privileged position among foreign powers in Shanghai, though smaller in population and weaker economically and politically, the French aesthetics, infrastructure and institutions defined the relationship with the city. But to suggest that Shanghai deserved its recognition as a French city – the “Paris of the East” – would require a blind-eye to the realities of economic and political influence.

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<sup>98</sup> In order of troop contribution – Germany, Japan, Britain, Russia, France, United States, Italy, Austria-Hungary. See complete table in Appendix of Raymond Bourgerie and Pierre Lesouef, *La guerre des boxers (1900-1901): Tseu-hi evite le pire*. Paris: Economica, 1998, p. 127.

The political events of the first twelve years of the twentieth century in China had varying effects in the modification of the French identity of Shanghai. The joint foreign force that ended Boxer Uprising further homogenized foreign community through common interest. Fear of anti-Christian, anti-foreign attacks, though not a serious threat in Shanghai, galvanized the foreign contingent into a more cohesive entity. The transition of Chinese intellectuals to a French model led to more intellectual exchange and created a mentoring relationship that further informed the identity of the city.

The French presence in Shanghai was somewhat French in the manner of the home country, but also unique, owing to its geo-political circumstances. The French city that had been cultivated up to 1900 was still a work in progress. Though, by that date, its legitimacy was no longer questioned.<sup>99</sup> The French Concession was originally small in area, overshadowed economically and never attracted a large number of settlers from France, leading to the lament, “une communauté plus nombreuse aurait peut-être eu plus de poids dans le développement historique de Shanghai.”<sup>100</sup>

In 1900 France was still competing to be the dominant foreign influence in Shanghai and China. But, by mid-decade they had given up this goal – influence over economics and language was lost to English-speaking interests, the French military was spread too thin around the world to be a regional power. The Concession looked French, but in light of the supremacy of the English language and the commercial power of Britain and the United States relative to France it is difficult to justify the nickname.

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<sup>99</sup> Maybon and Fredet, *Histoire de la Concession française...*, p. 404.

<sup>100</sup> Metzger, *Les lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 33.

## CHAPTER II – Expatriate Identity: Being French in Shanghai

French interest in overseas expansion for economic advantage was a well established fact by the dawn of the nineteenth century. By mid-century, the advantages of a permanent presence in China had been revealed, leading to the creation of the French Concession at Shanghai in 1848. But, how did the identity of the French residents of the Concession evolve? The French residents of the French Concession in Shanghai identified with the norms of the metropole, yet the realities of daily life in Shanghai did not exactly match those of the home-country. What did it mean to be French in Shanghai? How did the French endeavour to establish a French settlement? Is it possible to discern a French identity among the residents of the French Concession, with recognisably French attributes and deliberately imported aspects of the traditional French lifestyle? How was the self-conception of the French of Shanghai informed by the multinational reality of the foreign community? The establishment of a French community which sought to maintain particular characteristics of a French existence within a dynamic international city set the parameters for being French in Shanghai. Reflection on French identity in Shanghai will help explain how the city achieved and preserved its image as the “Paris of the East.”

The term “expatriate identity” acknowledges the link to France with the recognition that physical distance and the multinational composition of the population of Shanghai contaminated the homogeneity of the French experience in Shanghai. The resultant characteristics amount to the realities of “being French in Shanghai” and the inherent differences with living a French lifestyle in France.

Three sub-topics help to structure this investigation. First, *Toward a French Settlement* looks at the impetus to create a French community. Second, *Founding a French Identity* explores those aspects of the French experience in Shanghai that were recognisably and identifiably French. Finally, *The Power Dynamics of Shanghai* reveals the modifications imposed by the

multinational composition of the city on its French residents. This approach allows an analysis of the particular French experience that occurred in the “Paris of the East.”

### 1. Toward a French Settlement

The first step in establishing the nature of French identity is to look at the precursors to the concession era. Starting with French involvement in the Far East prior to the establishment of the concession, then looking at the circumstances that allowed for the assumption of territory and at the rules that governed this acquisition, will establish the roots of French identity in Shanghai. Finally, the consolidation of the territory within the context of international events shows the critical steps in maintaining an independent French interest at Shanghai.

Official French presence in the Far East, that is, not including Jesuit missions, prior to the Treaty of Whampoa was limited to occasional trade voyages to Guangzhou. Despite having established a presence in India and the Indian Ocean from the seventeenth century,<sup>101</sup> and even with the activities of European rivals such as Portugal (Aomen<sup>102</sup> 1557), the Netherlands (Dutch East Indies 1619 and Taiwan 1624), and Britain (Singapore 1819), France had not founded a permanent foothold in the Far East prior to the opening of the Treaty Ports.

As the Chinese of the nineteenth century considered themselves to be the only true civilisation in the world, all others being barbarians,<sup>103</sup> there was no centralised office of foreign affairs. Under these circumstances, direct relations between a foreign leader and the Chinese emperor, the ‘son of Heaven’, would be ludicrous. Therefore, local officials were charged with dealing with the barbarians who appeared in their jurisdictions, while the court at Beijing

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<sup>101</sup> The Indian colonies included: Chandernagore (1673), Pondicherry (1674), Yanam (1723), Mahe (1725), and Karikal (1739). Indian Ocean colonies founded in the same period: the Île de Bourbon (Reunion, 1664), Île de France (Mauritius, 1718), and the Seychelles (1756).

<sup>102</sup> Also known as Macao (Macao)

<sup>103</sup> The French missionary Père Huc noted that this identification was applied to Europeans; Père Huc, *L'Empire Chinois*. Paris: Gaume et Cie, 1879, p. 399.



remained aloof. Ironically, a century before the foreigners were to force their way into the country, Voltaire had ranked China as the most civilised and well-governed of nations.<sup>104</sup>

British traders had been doing a brisk, albeit illegal, trade of opium for Chinese goods since the mid-eighteenth century. In 1819 they establish a settlement at Singapore, bringing their economic and military power closer to China. Due to stricter enforcement of trade limitations, the decade prior to the outbreak of war saw a dramatic increase in opium smuggling into China by foreign merchants.<sup>105</sup> This had a devastating effect on the Chinese economy and provoked calls for a decisive response. Lin Zexu, the incorruptible Chinese administrator famed for his unflinching opposition to the evils of opium use, was installed to deal with the disturbance in Guangzhou, imposing strict penalties for the traffic and consumption of the drug. Mass seizures of product and arrests sparked violent conflict with the British. Lin ordered that Guangzhou should be completely closed. The British declared war and engaged the Chinese forces in the south. With ease the British forces moved north occupying key positions along the south and central coast including Shanghai. The hard-line Lin was recalled and sent into exile, replaced by a more conciliatory magistrate, Qishan; charged with negotiating an end to the conflict.<sup>106</sup>

War was concluded in 1842 with the drafting of the first of the unequal treaties with China, the Treaty of Nanjing. The Treaty secured trading rights in five Chinese ports, and the cessation of Hong Kong to Britain.<sup>107</sup> The French and American treaties were concluded in 1844 along the same lines as the British. By the end of the decade the Treaty Ports were evolving into concessions.

The French Concession was formally part of the French colonial empire, under the direction initially of the Governor-General of Indochina. As the territory amounted to a leased district of a

<sup>104</sup> Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China – 1800-1842*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979, p. 107.

<sup>105</sup> Greenberg, *British Trade...*, p. 112.

<sup>106</sup> Chesneaux, Bastid and Bergère. *China...*, p. 349.

<sup>107</sup> The Treaty Ports – Shanghai, Ningbo, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Guangzhou.

larger city, and was somewhat different from a colony, protectorate, mandate or sphere of influence, the land in question would be administered by the French for as long as the lease was held, but sovereignty remained in the hands of the Chinese. Thus, the consul-general became the chief administrator, and was appointed by and responsible to the *ministère des affaires étrangères* and not to the *ministère des colonies*.

While French presence included a cultural policy, much of the impetus came from political necessity, whereas influence was realised and maintained through economic means. “C’est sans doute parce que la politique culturelle apparaît moins comme une fin en soi que comme un moyen pour servir les deux ambitions propres à toute œuvre colonisatrice que sont la domination politique et la domination économique.”<sup>108</sup>

From the modest original boundaries established in the first treaties the French, British and American Concessions would expand several times as a result and cause of future conflicts. The development of the Concession territories held a deliberately Western aesthetic. At this point the territories were still reserved solely for foreign residents who had no desire to live in ‘Chinese’ surroundings, thus, the buildings, infrastructure and recreation areas closely resembled those far off places familiar to the residents.

During the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) the countryside around Shanghai and the Chinese administered zones of the city were occupied by the Small Swords Triad (*xiaodaohui*). The Foreign concessions were not assaulted, leading to a flood of Chinese refugees. This prompted the Concessions to overturn the prohibition on Chinese living within Concession territory in 1854. This development was critical to the future growth of Concession populations, as they became overwhelmingly Chinese.

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<sup>108</sup> Frédérique Girard, “L’enseignement du Français à Shanghai de 1911 à 1937” in Jacques Weber, *La France en Chine (1843-1943)*. Nantes: Ouest Éditions, 1997, p. 103.

The French ran afoul of the Chinese population when their imperial intransigence provoked anti-French rioting on 3 May 1874. The Conseil Municipal of the French Concession insisted on executing a plan to build new roads through the cemetery of the Ningbo Guild. Indicative of French colonial arrogance, “the Guild (huiguan) directors suggested alternate routes for the roads, offering not only to arrange and pay for an alternate site, but to reimburse the Council for any outlays already expended for the current plan.”<sup>109</sup> The French refused the offer.

After several months of rising tension an angry mob was unleashed, “the crowd set fire to French houses, striking at French residents along the way (though apparently avoiding those who identified themselves as British)[...]Forty foreign homes and three Chinese buildings were destroyed. Other targets were the French Municipal compound and the East Gate police station.”<sup>110</sup> The Shanghai Volunteer Corps, police and firemen of the International Settlement, 20 men from the French gunboat *Couleuvre*, and 78 men, with a Gatling gun, from the U.S. boats *Ashuelot* and *Yantic*, and eventually 150 Chinese troops, were deployed to counter the rioters and luckily preserved all foreign lives.

However, seven of the Chinese rioters were killed by men from the *Couleuvre*, necessitating a diplomatic settlement between France and China. Notably, the British consul declined to send British regulars, saying it was a matter for local authorities, straining relations between the British and French. Anti-French sentiment among the Chinese remained high, but further violence was averted when the French Consul independently asserted that the Ningbo Guild grounds would be preserved. The territory was given to the Ningbo Guild in perpetuity, though in reality this dispute was revisited in 1898 with the roads ultimately being built.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Goodman, *Native Place*..., pp. 160-1.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162-3.

The Sino-French War, started by a conflict between China and France over protectorate rights to Annam (Indochina), spread up the coast to involve the bombardment of Fuzhou, an attack on Formosa, and a coastal blockade. The circumstances of the war caused a political crisis in Third Republic France and the fall of Jules Ferry's cabinet in 1885. French tactics were largely inefficient, but still showed military superiority, and the war was concluded with a victorious treaty for France. A by-product of this result was increased nationalism among the Chinese and rising tensions with the French in Shanghai.

## 2. Founding a French Identity

The French presence in the Concession was evident in the composition and activities of the national community. Recognisably French characteristics, the physical importation of French goods for leisure and fashion, the extension of French cultural practice including the French language and customs and overarching influence of the Catholic Church were central features in the French identity that took root in Shanghai. The investigation of French presence will centre on discovering how French was the French Concession. That is to say, to what degree was the Concession "French" as an adjective of character, rather than merely of ownership?

The cultural penetration of French identity took many forms including theatre,<sup>112</sup> books, cinema, recreation and nightlife.<sup>113</sup> The desire to import a French lifestyle went as far as journal articles on maintaining a typical French garden in the challenging Shanghai climate.<sup>114</sup> The legendary French recreation and nightlife attracted members of all communities to the *Cercle Sportif français* and performances by the *Société dramatique*.<sup>115</sup> More significant to the conveying of the Paris of the East reputation was the underground nightlife. The permissiveness of vice within French controlled territory; gambling, drugs and prostitution, all tolerated by the

<sup>112</sup> *Bulletin de l'École française...*, p. 626.

<sup>113</sup> Weber, *La France en Chine*, p. 103.

<sup>114</sup> *La Quinzaine Coloniale*, 1904, p. 457.

<sup>115</sup> Bergère, *Histoire de Shanghai*, pp. 106-107.

French administration; created the 'city of lights' feel so well known and appreciated by travellers to the French capital. It is also worth noting that the standard of living was very good for all French citizens – not everyone was rich, but Shanghai had no poor French – allowing for the active pursuit of leisure.<sup>116</sup>

Attitudes on the French place in the world were also significant in shaping French identity. The charitable and 'civilising' attitude carried by the French overseas, was evident in Shanghai, and had a marked resonance in the French self-conception. The belief in the universality of humanity, in conjunction with the perceived superiority of French culture, had much to do with the moulding of Shanghai's French identity. Some contemporary French observers felt a responsibility to instil European values in the local community. "Il est certain qu'il est préférable d'avoir les Chinois sur les concessions sous le contrôle des Européens [...] plutôt que de les avoir au dehors, comme c'est le cas pour les faubourgs."<sup>117</sup>

The assimilationist nature of French presence was central to creating the Paris of the East, as the *Francisation* of indigenous people broadened French impact on Shanghai. Ironically, the Chinese had an equal measure of self-assuredness in the superiority of their culture. "[Le Chinois] se croit, sans manifester ouvertement son opinion, plus capable que les Européens, sur qui il a certainement l'avantage de l'incessante résistance, et il attend l'avenir, persuadé que ce dernier lui appartiendra."<sup>118</sup>

During the 1900 to 1911 period revolutionary activity in Shanghai was mostly confined to journal articles. "Il reste à Shanghai sept journaux chinois publiés sur les concessions; ils

<sup>116</sup> Nicholas R. Clifford, *Spoilt Children of Empire, Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1991, p. 72.

<sup>117</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 263-264.

<sup>118</sup> Charles Simond, *La Vraie Chine*. Paris: Plon, 1898, p. 2; Charles Simond was a pen name of Louis Adolphe Van Cleemputte, founder of the publication *Bibliothèque des voyages autour du monde*.

défendent les idées de réforme.”<sup>119</sup> Additionally, there were seven Chinese journals produced in Shanghai that presented local news and anecdotes from major cities around the world, but particularly Paris. At the same time the French Jesuits produce a scientific journal dealing with political issues. The conclusion of French observers was that the Chinese, in part due to exposure to French ideals, had experienced something of an awakening to the issues of the world, and were ready to modernise their systems. “Il ne manque certainement pas d’hommes intelligents en Chine. Il s’agirait de coordonner leurs efforts et de remettre l’administration de la Chine à ceux d’entre les fonctionnaires que l’on connaît comme honnêtes.”<sup>120</sup>

Initiatives were undertaken to maintain and enhance French language usage in Shanghai. The first Jesuit school to teach French opened in 1850; by 1886 the École Municipale was established to increase French usage among the Chinese. As the commitment to schools would suggest, there was official intention to make French the second language of the Chinese population, and to maintain a prominent place among the international community. Certainly, French could be heard in business, shops and social settings. To this end the administration was willing to work with the Jesuits to expand language use. In fact, the Jesuits were efficient proponents for the dissemination of French values operating an observatory, orphanage, and printer, among other services, in addition to the school and university.<sup>121</sup>

The fact that the French administration took steps to promote their language as a means of exerting influence was tempered by the results. Even within the French Concession, French and English were at least equally useful. “Dans la concession française a l’hôtel du consulat même, le concierge ne vous comprend pas, si vous ne lui parlez pas anglais. Vous êtes à l’église, dans la cathédrale catholique romaine, desservie par les missionnaires français; on y prêche en

<sup>119</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 99.

<sup>120</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 100.

<sup>121</sup> Henri Cordier, *Les Origines...*, p. III.

anglais!”<sup>122</sup> Despite the best efforts to maintain the French language in education and business, success was minimal. Other cultural customs also tended toward British norms. “La colonie étrangère tout entière a adopté la coutume des Anglais qui veut qu'on ne puisse se rendre à une invitation à dîner qu'en habit noir ou au moins en smoking.”<sup>123</sup> While English language and culture dominated foreign interaction, beyond that community Shanghai was most strongly influenced by the Chinese majority.

Beyond Treaty Port trading rights, de Lagrené had negotiated for the practice of Christianity in China, repealing a Chinese imperial edict from 1724. For the French, overseas involvements were never solely about trade,

les objectifs de la Grande-Bretagne étaient connus – la principale raison de la présence britannique en Chine était le commerce – les objectifs français étaient plus nuancés. Mais il apparaît vite que la France tenait à propager le christianisme en Chine – et le point de départ de ce retour sera Shanghai.<sup>124</sup>

By 1900 France was looking to maintain a slipping influence in China. In this effort the Religious Protectorate became a primary resource.<sup>125</sup> Missionaries were used to augment political weakness. “Catholics [whether foreign or Chinese] were surrogates for French power in China. [...] In the minds of rivalrous foreigners, Catholic success was thought to presage superior French influence [...] and to block British ambitions.”<sup>126</sup>

### 3. Being French in a Multi-national Crucible

The particular situation of the French in Shanghai from 1900 to 1911 can be discerned by looking at the composition of the various identities present in Shanghai during the period; appraising the modifications imposed by the key events; and evaluating the power dynamics within the multinational setting.

<sup>122</sup> Pageot, *A travers les pays jaunes...*, pp. 124-127.

<sup>123</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 261.

<sup>124</sup> Metzger, *Les lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 33.

<sup>125</sup> Bays, *Christianity in China...*, p. 99.

<sup>126</sup> Bays, *Christianity in China...*, p. 102.

Much of the French identity of Shanghai was defined by relationships with other communities. The closest relationships were with the International Settlement, which, while multinational and semi-democratic, was predominantly under British leadership. Some co-operative efforts were undertaken by the two foreign-administered zones and these are an important factor in plotting the understanding of being French in Shanghai. Less directly influential, but also a key modifier of identity, was the relationship with the Chinese.

The British held an ascendant position over the economy of Shanghai and the Municipal Council of the International Settlement was the political leader. While English language and culture dominated foreign interaction; for the Chinese majority Shanghai was culturally dominated by their own traditions. The merging of foreign and Chinese within concession territory was unique to Shanghai as the other open ports reserved those areas for foreign habitation.<sup>127</sup> Among all the foreign interests, it was the British presence that was culturally dominant in all of China. Each foreign community in Shanghai maintained cultural and religious distinctions, but the tone was set by the British, who shaped social relations, inside of the foreign community as with the rest of China. The British influence is evident in the rhythm of daily activities, in the organisation of the living environment, in the development of leisure and recreation, and in the use of the English language as the language of interaction between the foreign communities.<sup>128</sup>

The co-operative effort undertaken between foreign interests during the Boxer Rebellion did not occur without discussion, negotiation and planning. For much of the crisis this occurred at the ministerial level in the West with communications being extended between Paris, London, Berlin, Rome, Washington and other capitals as the issue intensified. One such communication

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<sup>127</sup> Bard, *Les Chinois chez eux*, p. 265.

<sup>128</sup> Bergère, *Histoire de Shanghai*, p. 97.



was the following note from the French Foreign Minister to his British counterpart outlining the fundamental principles under which their concerted efforts should be governed.

Il suffira de mentionner:

- 1<sup>e</sup> La nécessité d'un accord aussi complet que possible en vue notamment d'opérations concertées pour sauvegarder les existences qui peuvent être encore préservées dans toute l'étendue de l'Empire Chinois;
- 2<sup>e</sup> Intégrité de la Chine; écarter tout ce qui pourrait amener au partage de ce pays;
- 3<sup>e</sup> Enfin, le rétablissement, l'établissement ou la reconnaissance d'un Gouvernement central Chinois pouvant garantir l'ordre et la tranquillité dans le pays.<sup>129</sup>

This case is indicative of much of the decision-making during this time of crisis in China for the foreign powers invested therein. While local administrations did exist, a matter of international concern was dealt with by higher authorities despite their geographical distance and lack of intimate knowledge of the situation.

Beyond times of crisis, the Municipal Council of the International Settlement, which included members from each constituent community, was responsible for the government of the territory. Some infrastructure projects, such as roads and sanitation, were undertaken jointly with the French Concession. The Chinese administration rarely participated in co-operative efforts and was usually excluded from such undertakings.

The desire of French residents to live a 'French' life – from accommodations to the basics of creature comforts to the decadence of luxury and vice-ridden nightlife – defined a large part of the interaction within the foreign community. The colonial policy of the day demanded the imposition of French culture. The drive to civilise local populations through assimilation was part of the mandate for French presence everywhere, including Shanghai. Dissemination of the French language and Catholicism was a central part of the process. Each of these contributed to the creation of the "Paris of the East" identity of Shanghai, suggesting that this modern metropolis was, in fact, French.

<sup>129</sup> III. Note remise à S.E.M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre par le Ministre des Affaires étrangères – Paris, le 27 juillet 1900 in *Recueil des traités...*, p. 400.

Both the French and Chinese governments had a sense of their superiority in civilisation and political organisation over the other, and took a patronising position in negotiations as a necessary evil to maintain peace in the region. Regardless of the prevailing political power in France, left or right, the fact that it was a republican government perpetuated the notion that the French regime was more progressive than the dynastic empire of China. While this created a degree of aloofness, on both sides in diplomatic relations, other relationships were conducted on a different plane.

The residents of Shanghai engaged in manufacture and trade were primarily concerned with their business; any political or cultural dynamics that may have been present were secondary. It should be noted that at the time of the Opium War the Chinese merchants were in favour of opening China to trade with the barbarians, the government was opposed and the rest of the citizenry was largely indifferent.<sup>130</sup> Business intermediaries were among the first Chinese to receive training in French language and custom. This is not to suggest that the French considered Chinese business leaders their equal, but the tenor of the relationship was less openly adversarial to cultivate a viable working relationship.

The accelerated agitation for reform by the Chinese business and intellectual leadership was welcomed in French journals, seemingly as a continuation of their own revolutionary and republican legacy.<sup>131</sup> French sources reveal no official declarations in support of the revolutionaries, but French sentiment was known to be sympathetic, and there was certainly no financial consequence levied on the republicans by French officials. The impact of power transition to republican authority did modify the relations with the Concession and altered French self-conception in the new environment.

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<sup>130</sup> Johnson, *Shanghai...*, p. 223.

<sup>131</sup> Edmond Rottach, *La Chine en révolution*. Paris: Perrin, 1914.

The ordinary Chinese citizen had little direct contact with the French residents of Shanghai, except to provide some service, of which the French beneficiary would have paid little notice. Reaction was generally mixed between those who appreciated the advantages brought by foreign investment and infrastructure, and those who felt they were an uninvited blight on their civilisation and hoped to see them leave, but were unwilling to do anything to make it reality.

The period 1900-1912 was characterised by a series of political events that contributed to an evolution of French identity in Shanghai. The first, the Boxer Rebellion, introduced new levels of violence by Chinese reactionaries against foreigner presence; the Russo-Japanese War had a profound effect on Chinese intellectuals, bringing them closer to French traditions; and the last, the Xinhai Revolution, which established the Chinese Republic and altered the relationship between the French and the Chinese authorities, proved the most significant and illustrated the changing power dynamics.

The unifying impact of the campaign against the Boxer Rebellion for the foreign community of Shanghai is illustrated in a series of correspondence in July and August 1900, in which Théophile Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères of France, and Gaston de Bézaure, Consul général de France à Shanghaï, discussed the arrangements for the defence of Shanghai, not merely their own concession. In a message sent on 9 July 1900 Delcassé requested that de Bézaure see to the defence of the Spanish in Shanghai, “Sur la demande du Gouvernement espagnol, je vous prie de garantir la sécurité de ses nationaux qu'il n'a pas les moyens matériels de protéger.”<sup>132</sup> A week and a half later de Bézaure sent Delcassé detailed information on the situation at Shanghai for the French community at that point in the Boxer crisis:

Il y a: 1° à Shang-haï 450 Français et 80 protégés; 2° 230 Français dans ma circonscription consulaire. En cas d'évacuation forcée un paquebot en permanence serait nécessaire. Si des actes

<sup>132</sup> From M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères to M. de Bézaure, Consul général de France à Shang-haï – Shanghai, 9 July 1900 in Ministère des Affaires étrangères, *Documents Diplomatiques – Chine. (1899-1900)*, No. 135, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900, p. 76.

de guerre se produisent dans la région du Yang-tseu-kiang, où sont en ce moment trois navires de guerre anglais, Shang-haï ne se trouvera pas moins exposé que d'autres ports de la Chine. Notre concession est défendue par 140 volontaires.

J'estime que pour assurer la sécurité de notre concession servant de refuge trois croiseurs sont indispensables. Suivant l'exemple de mon collègue anglais j'ai conseillé aux missionnaires de l'intérieur de la vallée du Yang-tseu-kiang de se retirer dans les ports les plus voisins.<sup>133</sup>

Further communication pertains to co-operative efforts with the British, American and German forces, courtesy information exchanges about troop movements and the arrival of ships and troops into the Shanghai harbour, and the progress of negotiations with Chinese officials.

The direct impact was frenetic communication between various French bodies to ensure the safety of French citizens and property. Paris, Shanghai, Beijing, the other French Concessions in China, and even Indochina, were disrupted by the uprising. The consul-general of Shanghai was under great pressure to prepare for an attack and preserve French integrity. Indicative of the scope of involvement for the French administrations is a note from Consul de Bézaure to Delcassé concerning the defence of the Concession, "Je ne néglige rien pour mettre la Concession en état de défense. M. Doumer, gouverneur général de l'Indo-Chine, a bien voulu m'envoyer un canon Hotchkiss avec ses munitions. La compagnie des volontaires, forte maintenant de 140 hommes, s'exerce tous les soirs."<sup>134</sup> Even in this co-operative experience, the French were keen to note particular incidents that glorified their presence, such as the description of events by de Bézaure to Delcassé on the occasion of troops and artillery arriving at the port of the International Settlement, "ce matin [les troupes ont] traversé la concession internationale. Elles ont été reçues et accompagnées par les musiques du Général anglais, par le président du Conseil municipal de la

<sup>133</sup> From M. de Bézaure, Consul général de France à Shang-haï to M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères – Shanghai, 20 July 1900 in M.A.E., *Documents Diplomatiques – Chine. (1899-1900)*, No. 168, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900, p. 91.

<sup>134</sup> From M. de Bézaure, Consul général de France à Shang-haï to M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères – Shanghai, 16 July 1900 in M.A.E., *Documents Diplomatiques – Chine. (1899-1900)*, No. 149, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900, p. 83.

Concession française et plusieurs notables. Excellente impression sur la Colonie étrangère et sur la population chinoise.”<sup>135</sup>

The French contribution to the allied victory was celebrated by the community of Shanghai. Despite reservations over such involvement, the success of the campaign renewed French enthusiasm and further rooted their presence in China.

It was an external event, directly involving neither country, which had the greatest impact in turning Chinese intellectuals toward French influence. The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), fought principally between Russia and Japan over influence in Korea and Manchuria, had a profound effect on Chinese attitudes and by extension on French identity in Shanghai. The war resulted in a decisive Japanese victory, an unexpected and landmark occurrence. Though inspiring to militant elements within the nationalist movement of China, buoyed by the first victory of an Asian nation over a European power,<sup>136</sup> reform-minded intellectuals saw the rising Japan as a threat to Chinese sovereignty, and viewed the authoritarian militarism now exhibited by the Meiji government with suspicion and revulsion. From the late nineteenth century until 1905, Chinese intellectuals pursued higher training in Japan. It was also home to dissidents and political exiles. Essays demanding political reform for China frequently lauded the Meiji model of constitutional empire as the best route for China. This war changed that for many of China's top reformers. Chinese students looking to study abroad flocked to Paris, and, in fact, many of the leading Chinese communists to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s had some connection to French intellectual life.

The influence in the immediate post-war period could be seen in changing attitudes and relationships between French administrators and Chinese intellectuals. Already present in the

<sup>135</sup> From M. de Bézaure, Consul général de France à Shang-haï to M. Delcassé, Ministre des Affaires étrangères – Shanghai, 30 August 1900 in M.A.E., *Documents Diplomatiques – Chine. (1899-1900)*, No. 268, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900, p. 144.

<sup>136</sup> Fewsmith, *Party, State and Local Elites...*, p. 41.

French Concession for reasons of security, Chinese reformers and revolutionaries increasingly viewed France as the foreign model for China to follow. Sun Zhongshan<sup>137</sup> famously met with the French diplomat, Raphael Reau in 1905 to discuss his revolutionary position. Sun came away from the meeting impressed and looking to incorporate aspects of French traditions into his revolutionary movement.<sup>138</sup> By the same token, French officials began to recognize their changing position in China, through influence over the reform movement.<sup>139</sup> The leading French newspaper in Shanghai, *L'Echo de Chine*, endorsed a forceful French patriotism with contempt for Chinese nationalism; embarrassing both its clerical patrons and the administration, but promoting a stronger French stance in line with the new power structure of the city.

Dissatisfaction with the state erupted into rebellion in the interior city of Wuhan with the Wuchang Uprising in October 1911. Support demonstrations occurred around the country throughout the autumn and several of the southern provinces declared their independence from the Empire. The revolutionary wave washed over Shanghai, which because of its power and politics, was a key step in the success of the movement.<sup>140</sup> Sun Zhongshan and the Guomindang<sup>141</sup> organized the breakaway provinces into a Republic and established its capital at Nanjing. In desperation the Qing administration turned to well-respected official, Yuan Shikai, to restore order. With control of the balance of the Chinese military force Yuan supported the shift to a republic, but established his capital in Beijing. With no control over administrative means or the military to regain control, the dynastic administration gave way in the spring of 1912. Not

<sup>137</sup> Also commonly known by Wade-Giles Romanisation – Sun Yat-sen.

<sup>138</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-Sen*, Paris: Fayard, 1994, pp. 135-136.

<sup>139</sup> The *Bulletin de l'école française* published Sun Zhongshan's pledge to respect the foreign treaties of nations that did not get involved in the revolution.

<sup>140</sup> Fewsmith, *Party, State and Local Elites...*, p. 13.

<sup>141</sup> Also commonly known by Wade-Giles romanisation – Kuomintang (KMT).

wishing to plunge the country into civil war, the governments of Beijing and Nanjing negotiated the establishment of the republic with Yuan Shikai as president.<sup>142</sup>

French involvement in the revolution was limited to interested observer. Still, there was a sense of pride among many in seeing a republican revolution against a tired monarchy that had failed to maintain the nation for its citizens. Though official channels never tipped a regime preference, clearly the French of Shanghai looked forward to dealing with a republican administration. This revolution for the Chinese was also an evolution for French identity in Shanghai. Seeing the fruits of their intellectual partnership with the Chinese gave the French a renewed enthusiasm for their changing mission in China. No longer trying to be economically dominant, French influence would be realized through other means – education, religion and cultural exchange was now the differentiating dynamic of French presence – more and more the French saw themselves this way. Even so, the bulk of external cultural influence on the Chinese community came from a combination of English-speaking interests and the Japanese.

The Chinese dominated the population of the city; those who resided outside the Concessions had a much lower standard of living, but constituted the bulk of the workforce. Those who lived within the Concessions were part of a new and developing segment of the population, who were responsible for reforming Chinese processes in the Western model.<sup>143</sup> These wealthier members of the Chinese business class were critical to the economic development of Shanghai. Indicative of the broader power balance the Chinese Chamber of Commerce building was located in the International Settlement.

The full force of Western impact was concentrated in Shanghai, the flow of ideas and of non-economic institutions was of greatest revolutionary importance in the long run. The French

<sup>142</sup> Alain Roux. *La Chine au 20e siècle*. VUEF: Armand Colin, 2003, p. 34.

<sup>143</sup> Murphey. "The Treaty Ports...", p. 20.

Concession became a haven for political and ideological dissidents and revolutionaries. Part of this mobilisation of Chinese political identity was the rise of nationalism in the early 20th century. This profound shift of Chinese attitudes had a significant impact on French identity in Shanghai.

#### 4. Conclusion

The political events of the 1900 to 1912 period in China had varying effects in the modification of French identity. The joint foreign force that ended the Boxer Rebellion further homogenized the foreign community through common interest. Fear of anti-Christian, anti-foreign attacks caused the community shock at the violence and galvanized the foreign contingent into a more cohesive entity. At the same time the ultimate military victory brought a sense of national pride to each of the victors. The transition of Chinese intellectuals to a French model led to more philosophical exchange and created a mentoring relationship.

The French Concession was somewhat French in the manner of the home country, but also unique, owing to its geo-political circumstances. The French identity that had been cultivated up to 1900 was still a work in progress. The Concession was originally small in size, overshadowed economically and never attracted a large number of settlers from France, leading to the lament that a larger community may have had greater influence on the historical development of Shanghai.<sup>144</sup> Still, early in the new century the French community was concerned with increasing its influence – calls to establish a university, school of medicine and increase French-language learning in the local population. Infrastructure development, a power company, tramlines, new roads in an expanding concession territory, kept pace with developments in France and the International Settlement. A Religious Protectorate over Catholics, and later the extension of the concession to Xujiahui, expanded French influence through other Catholic foreigners and Catholic Chinese.

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<sup>144</sup> Metzger, *Les lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 33.



In 1900 France was still competing to be the dominant foreign influence in Shanghai and China. But, by mid-decade they had given up this goal – influence over economics and language was lost to English-speaking interests, the French military was spread too thinly around the world to be a regional power. French identity was powerful enough to assert independent ideas and direction, but it was not powerful enough to impose these on a broad scale. French identity was able to manifest itself in concentrated areas where it could be more influential – Catholicism, intellectual life, and entertainment took precedence – in part justifying the Paris of the East reputation. The Concession looked French, but French and English were at least equally useful. French goods were available and French entertainment plentiful, but English business interests dominated the economy. The French Concession was not important for its trade volume, which was low, or its industries, which were negligible.<sup>145</sup> The Catholic presence in China was based out of Shanghai and connected to the Concession, yet some in the Concession felt this was to the detriment of French cultural life. French civilising and humanitarian installations continued to operate, but without the burden of trying to be dominant.

The establishment of schools and universities served both the installation of French institutions and the propagation of French culture. For the manifestation of French culture through language and values, it was the Jesuit missionaries who were the key to the spread of French influence. Attempts to preserve and expand French language in the concession, taken up in the areas of business and education, never attained the same success. Ultimately, this may be the only area where France was able to hold an ascendant position against the other foreign influences and local tradition.

Sinologist and historian Marie-Claire Bergère suggests that French identity did not exist in any independent manner. She points to the supremacy of the English language and the

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<sup>145</sup> Metzger. *Les lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 32.

commercial power of Britain and the United States relative to France.<sup>146</sup> While these points are valid – France made efforts to exert an independent influence and in many cases succeeded. The French administration and community felt they had something distinct to offer and demonstrated a singular identity.

Though the French and English languages were at least equally useful within the borders of the French Concession; French identity was powerful enough to assert independent ideas and direction. It was not, however, powerful enough to impose these on a broad scale. French identity was able to manifest itself in concentrated areas where it could be more influential – Catholicism, intellectual life, and entertainment – in part leading to the maintenance of the “Paris of the East” reputation through the ensuing decades.

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<sup>146</sup> Bergère. *Histoire de Shanghai*, p. 128-129.

### CHAPTER III – The Frenchman's Burden: The implementation of the *mission civilisatrice* in Shanghai

The impetus for the British in waging the First Opium War and setting the terms of the unequal treaty that followed was economic advantage. The French took a broader approach to the extension of influence in drafting their agreement. The right to practice and proselytise the Christian faith in China was negotiated into the French treaty, and was formalised in an annex to the Treaty of Whampoa in 1846.<sup>147</sup>

In the early days of the French Third Republic the political debate shifted from monarchist versus republican to a nuanced republican political spectrum. Among the contentious issues being argued was colonial enterprise. For leading politicians like Jules Ferry and Eugène Etienne, an overseas presence was mandatory. Yet, coherent policy through the official channels of government remained elusive.<sup>148</sup> As a result, the driving force of French colonialism from Paris fell to a loose affiliation known as *le parti colonial*. Most of the members of this association were of the republican centre. A key motivation for many of these colonial advocates, including Ferry and Léon Gambetta was the political motive of returning France to Great Power status.<sup>149</sup> The dissenting opinion among French nationalists in the early days of the Third Republic saw colonial enterprise as a weakening of French power in Europe through the distribution of limited resources away from the metropolis.

The *parti colonial* shrewdly began to portray colonialism not merely in French terms, but as French interest against that of the other colonial powers and France's chief rivals in Europe – Britain and Germany.<sup>150</sup> By this characterisation of colonialism as an opportunity to demonstrate

<sup>147</sup> Pièce annexe. *Recueil des Traites 1684-1902*. p. 36-37.

<sup>148</sup> Bayly, *The French Empire...*, p. 68.

<sup>149</sup> Andrew, "The French Colonialist Movement...", p. 149.

<sup>150</sup> Baumgart, *Imperialism...*, p. 86.

French nationalism within Europe, rather than an overseas adventure, public interest and support increased, forcing political support and allowing for further investment of men and material.<sup>151</sup>

The most compelling, and ultimately most successful, argument in favour of French imperialism was the *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>152</sup> Even socialist leader Jean Jaurès, an avowed internationalist, spoke to the advantages of exporting French culture in the context of the *mission civilisatrice* in Morocco when he told parliament in 1903, “Oui, il est à desirer, dans l’intérêt même des indigènes du Maroc comme dans l’intérêt de la France, que l’action économique et morale de notre pays s’y prolonge et s’y établisse”<sup>153</sup> In Shanghai the most notable manifestations of the French *mission civilisatrice* at the beginning of the twentieth century were in education and religion.

Efforts to exert a French cultural influence came from both Paris and Shanghai. The realisation of the *mission civilisatrice* was driven by interests in the French government and those within the Concession itself. The Jesuits at Xujiahui and members of the secular French community contributed to the creation of a French cultural environment and the extension of French values into the Chinese consciousness.

The phrase “the Frenchman’s Burden” is a paraphrasing of the title of Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 poem, the *White Man’s Burden*. The poem is often interpreted as praise for the virtues of colonialism in bringing modernity to the colonised peoples. This attitude echoes the sentiments of the French colonialist movement and the activities undertaken by the French residents of Shanghai.

The implementation of the *mission civilisatrice* was central to the French overseas agenda. In Shanghai the Jesuits and the secular administration alike worked to bring French cultural

<sup>151</sup> Brunschwig, *French colonialism...*, p. 204.

<sup>152</sup> See Appendix for a late nineteenth-century French image promoting the French ‘gifts’ of progress, civilisation and commerce to colonised territories as part of the *mission civilisatrice*.

<sup>153</sup> Cited in Andrew, “The French Colonialist Movement...” , p. 155.

influence to China. The clearest manifestations of these efforts are in the dissemination of a French education to a Chinese elite by the French Jesuits.

French overseas identity was closely linked to the *mission civilisatrice*. How was this mission realised for the residents of Shanghai? Education, particularly the schools administered by the French Jesuits were a key artery of French influence; directly through the use of curriculum based on the French model and discretely through the practice of a policy of indirect evangelisation. By educating a Chinese elite in the French curriculum using the French language more French could be added to the French Concession.

To demonstrate the impact of the French *mission civilisatrice* in Shanghai the enterprise in education and religion will be explored. First, *Evaluating the civilising mission in education and religion* illustrates how French identity was delivered to the Chinese population of Shanghai through the uneasy alliance of the secular political administration and religious academic governance. Second, in the sub-section *Case Study: the Université Aurore* the institution is dissected to reveal the method behind this transmission of French civilisation. Finally, the interaction between the French and Chinese in the university context is examined in *Cultural Contact: Offering the French experience* to reveal the extent to which the French identity was adopted by the Chinese students.

### **1. Evaluating the civilising mission in education and religion**

Catholicism first gained a foothold in China in the sixteenth-century. From those earliest days the Christian missionaries used schools as a means to bring the faith and western knowledge to the students simultaneously. Religion was specified as a key part of the French presence in Shanghai by the state in the negotiation of the Treaty of Whampoa in 1844; the largest Jesuit centre in China was located on the outskirts of the city. However, with the advent of the Third Republic state sponsorship of religious enterprise would become contentious. The delivery of

education by the church in Shanghai would require both sides to make uncomfortable compromise.

After the opening of the Treaty Ports, the Jesuits established a mission at Xujiahui<sup>154</sup>, eight kilometres west of the original French settlement in Shanghai. The church, schools, orphanage, library and scientific establishments set up there were originally part of a regional French influence, but after territorial expansion of the French Concession the Jesuit Centre and subsequent establishment of the Université Aurore became a central part of French influence in the city.<sup>155</sup>

The acknowledged genesis of Catholicism in China was the mission of Matteo Ricci. His innovative approach of harmonising Christianity and Chinese culture, particularly Confucianism, through cultural accommodation, along side the apostolate of science, philosophy and Christian faith, became the general model of mission for many of the Jesuits who followed him. Ricci, based in Beijing, was literate in classical Chinese which facilitated his top-down approach to conversion. The strategy of identifying traditional Chinese faith with Christianity was designed to create a Chinese Christianity which was much more palatable to the local population than converting to a foreign faith.<sup>156</sup> However, Ricci's successors did not maintain his early momentum. Eventually Western encroachment and Christian mission came to be synonymous for the Chinese court, and both were shut out in the early eighteenth century.

The nineteenth century French Jesuits in Shanghai were among those who believed Ricci's model of indirect evangelisation would still be most effective and sought to follow it.<sup>157</sup> That is, missionaries eschewed direct preaching employing other means such as charitable works, scientific installations and education to gain the favour and attention of non-Christians. Despite

<sup>154</sup> Xujiahui was transliterated as *Zi-ka-wei* in many French texts.

<sup>155</sup> Cordier, *Les Origines...*, p. 14.

<sup>156</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", pp. 658-662.

<sup>157</sup> Joseph de la Serviere, *Histoire de la Mission du Kiang-Nan*. (Shanghai, Imprimerie de l'orphelinat de Tou-se-wei, 1914), p. 41.

their intentions, however, the new breed of Jesuit missionary in China bore little resemblance to Ricci. Most notably, the notion of cultural accommodation, of creating a Chinese Catholicism, rather than turning the Chinese into French Catholics, was lost.

The Jesuits were so quick to return to China that in Shanghai in the wake of the post-Opium War treaties that they pre-date the arrival of the first French Consul by five years. Rather than re-establishing in Beijing, which had been the hub of Jesuit operations before the 1724 edict, this time the main Jesuit centre was established near Shanghai. The first building used by the Jesuits was the former residence of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese convert, Paul Xu. The renewal of missionary activity was codified in Article 13 of the Treaty of Beijing (1860), “Les missions étrangères ont le droit d’entreprendre des activités missionnaires en Chine.”<sup>158</sup>

Success came quickly in several of the Jesuits ‘indirect’ pursuits. Scientific accomplishments were achieved with the Jesuits of Xujiahui, publishing papers as early as 1855. The meteorological observatory that was to become the first home of the Université Aurore was constructed by 1873. The Sheshan astronomical observatory was in use two decades later. A magnetical observatory was operational by 1908. From the early days of the mission artefacts were being collected that would become the basis of the world-renowned Musée Heude (natural history) and the Musée des Antiquités Chinoises.

The first achievements in education at the new mission at Xujiahui were realised in 1850 with the opening of the Collège Saint-Ignace, which coincided with the completion of the church. It is significant to note that the first school and the first house of worship were completed at the same time, suggesting that the indirect evangelisation through education was as important for the mission as the direct evangelisation of the church. The system put in place at Collège Saint-Ignace aimed to prepare the transition from primary to secondary school education and permit top

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<sup>158</sup> “Convention de paix additionnelle au Traité de Tien-Tsin conclue à Pékin, le 25 octobre 1860” in *Recueil des traités...*, p. 87.

students to excel in Chinese official examinations or prepare them for further study in the Chinese system. By the end of its first decade this school was home to nearly one hundred students.<sup>159</sup> Up to the late nineteenth century the Jesuits of Xujiahui pursued a modest mission in the education of Chinese students. The Collège Saint-Ignace only provided for a secondary education and courses were taught in Chinese. Students were only exposed to French during foreign language classes, which also included English.<sup>160</sup>

The *Quinzaine Coloniale* noted the contribution of the Jesuits in exerting French influence over moral matters in China. The Catholic missions, which had cultivated various methods of evangelisation, are acknowledged to have acquired real authority and prestige in the Qing Court and throughout the upper echelon of Chinese society,<sup>161</sup> despite their slipping influence in France.

Proposals for an institute of higher learning were pursued by the Mission in Xujiahui in 1860 and 1898, but were abandoned without realisation in both cases.<sup>162</sup> As the turn of the century approached the Chinese students of the missionary school demanded further education beyond the secondary schooling offered. The Jesuit educators began to seriously explore the possibilities of providing higher education in French.

This coincided with a change in attitude from the French authorities. Though ardently anti-clerical and keen not to cross jurisdiction between church and state in France the overseas situation was somewhat different. Having lost the battle for economic supremacy, the French were now concerned about their slipping cultural influence. To rectify this situation the Embassy in Beijing envisioned a translators' college that would extend the use of the French language in the capital. However, the end of the Hundred Days Reform and the return of the conservative Empress Dowager Cixi to power in China put an end to dreams of extending Western influence

<sup>159</sup> Wiest. "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 667.

<sup>160</sup> Brossollet, *Les Français de Shanghai...*, p. 173.

<sup>161</sup> "Les intérêts français en Chine et la diplomatie" in *La Quinzaine Coloniale*. Tome X, No. 11 (10 August 1901), p. 454.

<sup>162</sup> Metzger. *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 48.



in the capital. In Shanghai, under the auspices of the French Concession and outside of imperial control, the opportunity for a French-language university remained. Now endorsed by the administration the Catholic university had genuine possibilities of becoming a reality.<sup>163</sup>

The French colonial journal *La Quinzaine Coloniale* noted the effect of the secular influence of France in China by pointing out the role of French engineers in the development of Shanghai, but in the next sentence lamented the struggle to entice scholars, teachers and doctors to continue the ‘civilising’ work underway. Encouragement is offered with the assertion that there is an excellent chance of career success for qualified individuals willing to take up the challenge. Marrying the *mission civilisatrice* with individual and national advantage the article points to a strong and wise diplomacy that can find a way to make the best use of national interests along with the moral imperative. Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé is credited with maintaining a positive relationship with China despite the internal quarrels of the Third Republic.<sup>164</sup> It is within this political context that the anti-clerical government in Paris decided not to oppose, and even support, the Jesuits in their attempt to provide a French standard of education for Chinese students in Shanghai. The mission to educate, along the French model, was a common goal for both Jesuit and French Republican.

The French missionaries and the *parti colonial* used the notion of exporting French culture to China, but each had a very different idea of what this should entail. For the Jesuits the call to mission was clear, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15); the exportation of French civilisation was integral to their global evangelisation. For the French government the civilising mission was central to political and economic goals, “It is through expansion, through influencing the outside world, that nations persist and last” (Leon

<sup>163</sup> Brossollet, *Les Français de Shanghai...*, p. 173.

<sup>164</sup> “Les intérêts français en Chine et la diplomatie” in *La Quinzaine Coloniale*. Tome X, No. 11 (10 August 1901), p. 454.

Gambetta). Each side was willing to work with the other to further their particular aims often trying to manipulate circumstances to the advantage of their agenda. The most obvious example of this behaviour is the financial support that the Third Republic government provided to Catholic institutions in China, including the Université Aurore, under the auspices of the French protectorate over all Catholics in China, even after the passage of the French law on the separation of church and state in 1905.<sup>165</sup>

## 2. Case Study: the Université Aurore

Attacked by the anti-clerical lobby, even before it could open, who were incensed that the first representation of French higher education in China should be organised by the Jesuits, and closed, temporarily, after only two years, the Université Aurore would go on to be a significant artery of French influence and a singular model of the *mission civilisatrice* in China. The plan to establish the university would have the support of the government, though this did not prevent a turbulent first few years; the curriculum was controversial, but ultimately followed the French model; and it would take nearly a decade for the university to become properly accredited by the French and Chinese governments. But in Shanghai, this was the French civilising mission in action.

### a. The university initiative

There was support beyond the Jesuit community for a French university in China. Questions of location, composition, administration and orientation (religious or secular) were hotly debated. Noted contemporary writer on China and long-time Shanghai resident Albert-Auguste Fauvel weighed in on the importance of including a Faculty of Medicine in the French university in China regardless of the other conditions – though he clearly states a preference for a Jesuit run institution in Shanghai. He displays the pragmatism of the government in asserting that

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<sup>165</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 669.

the Jesuits are best placed to implement the humanitarian mission and simultaneously extend the influence of France within China.

His endorsement of Shanghai is largely based on the infrastructure (meteorological observatory, astronomical observatory, museum of natural history, printer, etc.) that the Jesuits have established at Xujiahui, “Hâtons-nous de profiter de ce que celui-ci n'est pas encore sorti de terre et, battant le fer tant qu'il est chaud, complétons ce que les savants missionnaires jésuites ont déjà créé à Zi-ka-wei.”<sup>166</sup>

Beyond the scientific resources already established by the Jesuits, Fauvel pointed to the facility of establishing a Faculty of Medicine in Shanghai; further noting that the Jesuits' skills in the Chinese language put them far ahead of lay teachers in being able to educate local students. He further pointed out that when the municipal council of the French Concession decided to open a French school in 1879, they called on the Jesuits to do the teaching. Finally he makes the financial argument that Jesuits are the most cost effective way for the government to extend its influence, “Les finances de l'État ne peuvent guère supporter de gros sacrifices d'argent en vue d'augmenter notre prestige en Extrême-Orient. Il est de toute nécessité d'utiliser là-bas ces professeurs, parfaitement brisés aux meilleures méthodes d'enseignement, que l'on appelle les Jésuites.”<sup>167</sup>

Fauvel tries to balance the anti-clerical sentiment in France with the practical advantage to be gained by teaming with the Jesuits on a prospective university, “Comme nous l'avons dit, les bases existent déjà à Shanghai, il n'y a plus qu'à compléter. Si on veut servir efficacement les intérêts français en Extrême-Orient on devra avec l'aide des missionnaires, fonder à Shanghai

<sup>166</sup> A.A. Fauvel. “L'Enseignement Français en Orient et en Chine” in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Tome 35, No. 104 (February 1903), p. 326.

<sup>167</sup> Fauvel, “L'Enseignement Français”, pp. 328-329.

une Université française dans laquelle la faculté de médecine devra, avoir un rôle prépondérant.”<sup>168</sup>

The presence of a faculty of medicine, though not realised in the initial stages of the actual French university in Shanghai, is presented as a key component for maintaining and raising French prestige for the lay observers. The initiative to launch the university is praised in itself, but Fauvel estimates that a Faculty of Medicine would bring France a thousand times more esteem in China, “la fondation d’une Université de médecine fera mille fois plus pour la gloire de notre pays dans l’Empire du Milieu que l’ouverture de cours de sciences commerciales ou autres.”<sup>169</sup>

While the need for the establishment of a French university in Shanghai was widely shared, a Jesuit-run institution was not universally endorsed. Dr. Regnault responded to Fauvel’s article in a subsequent issue of *Revue politique et parlementaires*, arguing that few of the Jesuit resources in Shanghai were pertinent to the most important aspect of the proposed university, the medical school. He suggests that Guangzhou may be even more useful given the French colonial presence just south of the city in Indochina.<sup>170</sup> Dr. Regnault further asserts that the teaching should be done in French, therefore, the linguistic advantage of the Jesuit teachers is not applicable. His anti-clerical stance is clear when he insists that the French Faculty of Medicine should be kept separate from religious influence as a fundamental element for success, “La Faculté de médecine française ne devrait d’ailleurs pas être inféodée à des missionnaires d’une confession quelconque; elle ne devrait être ni catholique, ni protestante; elle devrait être laïque et

<sup>168</sup> Fauvel, “L’Enseignement Français”, p. 330.

<sup>169</sup> Fauvel, “L’Enseignement Français”, p. 330.

<sup>170</sup> James Regnault. “Création d’une Faculté de Médecine Française en Chine” in *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, Tome 38, No. 112 (October 1903), p. 99.

rester indépendante de toute religion occidentale c'est là, croyons-nous, une condition essentielle de son succès."<sup>171</sup>

He further inflamed the debate by suggesting that if the Jesuits became involved in the teaching of medicine it would lead to an epidemic of attempted death bed conversions of critically ill Chinese by their graduates,

Les médecins élevés et instruits par des missionnaires religieux seront des catéchistes plutôt que des médecins; ils croiront bon de prêcher leur foi partout autour d'eux; ils mêleront facilement les pratiques religieuses aux traitements scientifiques s'ils sont logiques avec eux-mêmes, ne s'efforceront-ils pas de faire des conversions *in extremis*? N'iront-ils pas jusqu'à baptiser un malade sur son lit d'agonie 'pour sauver une âme'? Les Chinois ne verront en eux, avec raison, que des missionnaires religieux déguisés et le mouvement xénophobe ne pourra que s'accroître.<sup>172</sup>

Despite being in full agreement that a university featuring a Faculty of Medicine would be very useful politically and commercially, citing a report by Indochina Governor Paul Doumer stating that nothing serves the French interest better than medical institutions, Dr. Regnault would not consider working with the Jesuits to achieve this aim.<sup>173</sup> Such was the anti-clerical sentiment, even in the context of the overseas humanitarian mission.

The ultimate decision to allow the Jesuits to be responsible for the French presence in higher education was aided by the excellent reputation of the Jesuits of the Xujiahui mission among French government administrators involved in the *mission civilisatrice*. This was confirmed in 1898 when the French ambassador to Beijing, Stephen Pichon, was told by the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères to facilitate the opening of a French school of higher education to be run by the Jesuits.<sup>174</sup>

The advantages of using Jesuit resources in a proposed French university are foreshadowed in *La Quinzaine Coloniale* in 1901. Catholic missions are admired for their stability and

<sup>171</sup> Regnault, "Création d'une Faculté de Médecine", p. 100.

<sup>172</sup> Regnault, "Création d'une Faculté de Médecine", p. 100.

<sup>173</sup> Regnault, "Création d'une Faculté de Médecine", p. 104.

<sup>174</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 676.

influence despite challenges from both the Chinese and French. It is noted that at the time of writing the Jesuits had redoubled their zeal in the work of education, colleges and Franco-Chinese schools in various centres in China. This commitment is seen as the model by which French influence may best be exerted in China.<sup>175</sup> This revelation allows for the anti-clerical Third Republic to openly endorse and even support the mission of the future Jesuit university.

The French government became involved in negotiations that led to opening of the Université Aurore. By 1903 the government in Paris fully supported the establishment of the university by the Jesuits, but insisted that there would be no financial support for the project.<sup>176</sup> However, government did become financially and logistically involved and remained so for the duration of the institution.<sup>177</sup> The indirect approach employed in the university certainly made support more palatable for the government.

#### ***b. Foundation and Mission of Aurore***

The establishment of l'Université Aurore was an initiative from within the community at Shanghai, and was seen as means of exerting influence and representing French identity. In 1903 debate raged among French intellectuals, not about whether a French university should be established in Shanghai, but what form it should take.<sup>178</sup> Ultimately, it was a Chinese former-priest, with the support of the French Jesuits of Xujiahui, who established the Université Aurore in the French Concession. For the opponents to church involvement in education the College Municipal Français was founded in 1911, but this institution never earned the reputation or influence of the Université Aurore. The Université Aurore became one of the key methods for imparting French culture, language and philosophy into the Chinese consciousness.

<sup>175</sup> "Les intérêts français en Chine et la diplomatie" in *La Quinzaine Coloniale*. Tome X, No. 11 (10 August 1901), p. 454.

<sup>176</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 48.

<sup>177</sup> Wiest notes that as of 1997 the French government was still providing assistance to Shanghai Second Medical University, which took over the campus of Aurore in 1952 in Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 676, fn 41.

<sup>178</sup> *Revue politique et parlementaire...*, Tomes 35-38, pp. 326-330.

When the Jesuits returned to China in the mid-nineteenth century they saw a backward country run by an inefficient and corrupt government, torn apart by rebellions, weakened by famine and plagues. Their system of education and Christian faith was intended to create new elite to rebuild the country on a firm Christian foundation. Aurore would provide the first-rate education necessary to facilitate these goals. In this they saw themselves as following in the same tradition as Ricci, but the Jesuits at Aurore were guided by a different model of mission. They took what was a strategy for Ricci – the conversion of society from the top down through indirect means – and made it the core of their method. Ricci's method relied on the missionaries becoming Chinese with the Chinese, and on the Gospel becoming part of the Chinese culture. The Jesuits of Aurore hoped that Chinese elite, educated at a French Catholic institution, would extol the virtues of the faith throughout Chinese society.

Simultaneous and parallel to the French musings on the viability of a French university, Chinese educator and former Jesuit working at the College Saint-Ignace, Ma Xiangbo, was developing a further study plan with some of his more accomplished students. At the time, education in China was in transition. The ancient imperial examination system that relied on the study of Chinese classics and had always been the centre of intellectual life in the empire was the subject of reform attempts and had been widely discredited by China's weakness in the face of foreign aggression. Educators variously attempted to maintain or modify the old system, adopt Western practices or create a new Chinese methodology. Ma Xiangbo was interested in developing a Western-Chinese hybrid education that would constitute a meeting point of cultures and provide Chinese students with a link to their intellectual heritage, while equipping them to join increasingly Western-oriented intellectual elite.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Hayhoe. "Towards the Forging...", p. 324.

Ma was himself, a product of the College Saint-Ignace. He understood and appreciated the advantages of structure and continuity in the education process. In an attempt to insulate his students from the upheaval of the system in China, he approached the Jesuits about pursuing the project in partnership. Ma made a significant endowment of his personal funds to the Jesuits to finance the launch of the university.

Though the Jesuit missions traditionally remained disengaged from political machination and expected the same of their students, it was largely activist exiles from Nanyang Gongxue that formed the first class of students at Université Aurore. Reacting to strict prohibitions on Western political and philosophical materials, such as those of J.-J. Rousseau, and the banning of the work of Chinese reformer Liang Qichao; one hundred students left Nanyang Gongxue along with noted scholar Cai Yuanpei in 1902. These reform minded students split between forming the Patriotic School with Cai, and persuading Ma to bring his vision for a hybrid university to fruition so they could make up the inaugural class.<sup>180</sup>

For years Ma had been frustrated by imperial resistance to his proposed reforms of the education system and now believed that progress could be made with some form of democratisation of the government. This experience made him somewhat sympathetic to the reform and revolutionary movements that opposed the Qing Dynasty. Though it was against his own Jesuit training and contrary to the position of his partners in Aurore, Ma was willing to open the new university as a safe haven for political revolutionaries.<sup>181</sup>

The university opened in the spring of 1903 with great optimism and expectations. The facilities included the old meteorological observatory at Xujiahui and the curriculum focused on the best aspects of European civilisation – science, philosophy and Latin. Within months courses

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<sup>180</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging...", p. 324-325.

<sup>181</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging...", p. 326.



in English and French taught by Jesuit scholars from the mission at Xujiahui were added. With the appointment of Father Perrin, as Deputy Director, and two scholastic fathers added to the professorial ranks; enrolment increased to better than 100 students for the second year. To satisfy the desire of the increased student population courses in German, Italian, Russian, fencing, dancing and piano joined those already on offer.

The Jesuits were not comfortable with this haphazard approach to academics, charging that the students had too much influence over curriculum. In 1905, they tried to implement some order. Contentious issues included the curriculum, administration, admissions and student activism. In the reorganisation Ma Xiangbo was moved out of the way and put in charge of administering the finances. The changes led to a students' revolt. Opposition was carried to the point of withdrawal from the university by many of the students. Ma also decided to leave rather than continue under the new administrative order. The rejection of the new system and the defection of students forced the first incarnation of the Université Aurore to close its doors after only two years.

Despite this power struggle the Jesuits were satisfied with the academic progress of their young students, "Le R.P. Supérieur et le P. Recteur en ont été étonnés et très satisfaits. Ces jeunes gens de 18 à 30 ans ont fait de réels progrès, en sciences (arithmétique, algèbre, géométrie, physique et chimie), en philosophie, en langues (français, allemand, anglais, latin) en histoire et géographie, sans compter le dessin (professeur P. Hermand) et les exercices militaires (1 heure tous les jours, commandés par un sergent français et le P. Ménez)."<sup>182</sup> From the beginning the programs were quite comprehensive, incorporating fine art and physical activity into the academic programs.

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<sup>182</sup> "Université de Zi-ka-wei" in *Relations de Chine*, (April 1905), p. 528.

The difference in vision for the university between Ma and the Jesuits amounted to Ma's dream of a cultural meeting point between East and West, and the Jesuits ambition to create a university that was on par with the institutions of Europe. To create their institution, the Jesuits implemented strong authority at the top, a clear curriculum with structured programs, and recruited students for whom studying would be the primary activity. Ma was blamed for his permissiveness; the student government organisation was criticised for interfering in academics and being a distraction from serious study; the curriculum was cited for being too broad and ambitious to be practical. The sanctuary offered to the revolutionaries for whom Ma held political sympathy was intolerable for the apolitical mission of the Jesuits, and could not be permitted to continue. Future students would be expected to betray no political convictions, and those that did risked expulsion or arrest.<sup>183</sup>

In their explanation of the failure of the first Université Aurore, the disgruntled students complained to the Chinese-language press in Shanghai of the undue influence exerted by the Catholic Mission. Yet, in the same articles they praised the competence and dedication of the Jesuit faculty.<sup>184</sup>

When the university re-opened it was under full Jesuit control. The institutional organisation and curriculum were built on the French academic model.<sup>185</sup> French became the primary language of instruction while classes emphasised lecturing and lab work. The administrative structure was top-down, with well-defined programs of study, and a homogeneous and obedient student body. The Jesuits were trying to repair a reputation they felt had been compromised by the political activism of student revolutionaries. As a result, the new enrolment included younger, less politically minded students whose values could still be shaped without

<sup>183</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 670-671.

<sup>184</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging...", p. 332.

<sup>185</sup> Joseph de la Servièrre. *Croquis de Chine*. Paris, Gabriel Beauchesne et Cie, 1912, p. 47.

resistance. A noted local scholar, Professor Zeng, had been recruited to legitimise the institution within the local community and a Chinese Jesuit, Father Laurent Li the founder of the press at Xujiahui, replaced Father Perrin.<sup>186</sup> Some notables of Shanghai's Christian community were brought in to help with daily administration, freeing the Jesuits fathers to focus on developing the academic programs and teaching.

At the same time Ma Xiangbo founded another university, which attracted the dissident student population that had walked out of Aurore. This attempt at an institute of higher education proved more successful than his first. As the Jesuits kept the original name of Aurore (Zhendan), Ma launched this new institution as Fudan (renewal of Aurore). This institution is today ranked among the best universities in China.

From 94 students at the re-opening of Aurore in 1905 to 172 in 1907, and this increase despite a high attrition of applicants, the necessity to move into a larger space closer to the city became acute.<sup>187</sup> This move had been foreshadowed in an issue of *Relations de Chine* in 1905, where it was lamented that the enrolment had to be capped at 150 students, as all existing space was full; and that the permanent home would likely be erected between Xujiahui and Shanghai in the French Concession near the new hospital.<sup>188</sup> Though a further 160 students sat the entrance examination in January 1906 there were only 50 places on offer for the next year's intake of students.<sup>189</sup> The Jesuits of Aurore were beginning to feel the urgency to open the new and larger location in order to fulfil their mission.

<sup>186</sup> "Une Œuvre de Haut Enseignement" in *Relations de Chine*, (July 1918), p. 86.

<sup>187</sup> Ghislaine de la Hitte, "L'Université Aurore, Shanghai" in *La Lettre du Souvenir Français de Chine* No. 29, (April 2009), p. 2.

<sup>188</sup> "Université de Zi-ka-wei" in *Relations de Chine*, (April 1905), p. 528.

<sup>189</sup> "Le progress en Chine" in *Relations de Chine*, 1906/01, p. 92.

Until 1908 the university remained housed on the outskirts of Shanghai in the observatory buildings of the Mission at Xujiahui. A parcel of land in the Lujiawan district<sup>190</sup> of the French Concession was acquired by the Jesuits in 1904,<sup>191</sup> and was developed into the permanent home of the university. Student residences (west) and classrooms and administration buildings (east) were constructed on opposite sides of the street.<sup>192</sup>

In setting the mission at Aurore the Jesuits altered the approach initiated by Ricci and taken up by the mission at Xujiahui. The idea of placing Christianity within a traditional Chinese context was rejected. The pagan Chinese religious rites were condemned by the Holy See in the mid-eighteenth century, equating these rituals with French Catholicism was unthinkable. The new approach was to introduce their superior system of education, grounded in Christian principles, to create an elite intellectual class that would modernise the ancient civilisation, and even if not all converted to Christianity, they would at least be sympathetic to the faith.<sup>193</sup>

The published mission of the university was not quite so complex or ambitious. In the first year of the original Aurore it was stated that the mission of the university was to allow young Chinese to study European science and give them higher education without requiring them to go to Europe or America.<sup>194</sup>

When the university re-opened in 1905 the direction was slightly modified to indicate that the primary goal of the university was to allow Chinese students to receive secondary and higher

<sup>190</sup> In the French Romanisation of the time it was spelled Lo-Ka-Wei. This roughly corresponds to the modern Luwan District of Shanghai.

<sup>191</sup> Father Diniz, architect of the Mission, procured 6 hectares covering both sides of Dubail Avenue (Chongqing Lu).

<sup>192</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 48. – Ironically, the remaining structures from this campus were incorporated into Ma Xiangbo's second university, Fudan, in 1997.

<sup>193</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 669.

<sup>194</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 49; "Cette université a pour but de faciliter aux jeunes Chinois l'étude des sciences européennes et de leur donner l'enseignement supérieur sans qu'ils aient besoin d'aller le chercher en Europe ou en Amérique."

education without going overseas and spending time in Europe or America.<sup>195</sup> One of the underlying motives in providing a Western education on Chinese soil was the concern that when young Chinese students went abroad they frequently lost their way, either into a life of decadent excess or into atheistic, socialist or revolutionary philosophies.<sup>196</sup> Chinese students had been going to Europe and North America for university education since 1854, with about 30 studying in France by 1877, and there was some evidence to corroborate the Jesuits' concerns.<sup>197</sup>

Though the missionaries at the university had hopes that students would convert to Catholicism, religion was not to be part of the curriculum. The place of religion in the goals of the university is expressed in a later mission statement indicating that the training at Aurore aimed to create an elite worthy of its role as the leading class of China, imbued with moral and social truths; an elite of sound ideas, in touch with the Catholic religion, aware of the prejudices against it, and an appreciation during the current disarray.<sup>198</sup>

The Jesuits at Aurore displayed a keen respect for the "other" and developed a close relationship with the students. As Aurore grew, successive rectors lamented that these relationships were not cultivated by the growing lay faculty that had to be employed to meet the needs of the curriculum. There remained an unsatisfied desire for more young Jesuit teachers to enhance that special link between the students and the institution.<sup>199</sup>

### ***c. The educational programs: an introduction to modernity***

Unlike their missionary predecessors, the French Jesuits were not interested in fitting themselves into Chinese society, they never planned to adapt the Gospel to China, nor did they

<sup>195</sup> "Programme des Etudes" in *Programme de l'Université Aurore*. Shanghai, Université Aurore, 1905, p. 11; "Le but principal de l'école est de faciliter aux étudiants chinois l'acquisition des connaissances de l'enseignement secondaire et supérieur, sans qu'ils aient besoin de traverser les mers et séjourner en Europe ou en Amérique."

<sup>196</sup> de la Servière, "Une université française en Chine," in *Relations de Chine*, (1925), p. 16.

<sup>197</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai*..., p. 70.

<sup>198</sup> " ' Aurore,' Une université Catholique en Chine," in *Relations de Chine* (1936) ; "la formation de Aurore s'attache à créer une élite digne de son rôle de class dirigeante pénétrée des vérités morales et sociales; une élite aux idées saines avant perdu, au contact de la religion catholique, ses préjugés contre elle, et l'appréciant dans le désarroi actuel!"

<sup>199</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 673.

look to immerse themselves in the Chinese culture. They sought to bring a superior French education to China in the model of indirect evangelisation. To this end two program levels were developed: *cours préparatoire* – which roughly corresponded to a Chinese secondary education; and *cours supérieur* – which was meant to be at least on par with the programs offered in Chinese superior schools, or roughly equal to a university education in Europe. The university originally offered courses under four departments: Literature, Philosophy, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences. The programs in the sciences were developed to provide practical skills for students, such as marine navigation and typhoon prediction.

The first of the *cours préparatoire* was offered in Chinese, but from the second year forward the bulk of courses were offered in French. The courses offered in the two-year *cours supérieur* were conducted in French.

For the first three years the courses were the same for all students: French and English language classes, fundamentals of classical and modern European literature, history and geography of China and the Great Powers, philosophy, political economy, civil and international law, mathematics and science. In the fourth year students were divided into two programs: Literature or Sciences. The Literature section offered unique courses in French and English literature, and further studies in law. The Sciences program featured courses in advanced mathematics, zoology, botany and geology. Philosophy, French and English language, rhetoric, and history and geography were taught to both groups. While ambitious, these programs were not out-of-line with those being offered at other institutions at the time. In the later years of their program students were encouraged to specialise in a particular branch to attain sufficient expertise. In such cases, the years of study would increase.

The first year in the new premises, 1908, brought the largest student population since opening (242 registered students<sup>200</sup>) and a renewal of the programs and directorship. New Director Father Allain was put in charge of implementing the new, longer programs designed to further the academic depth offered at the Université Aurore. The redesigned *cours préparatoire* still lasted three years with French as the language of instruction for the final two years, now included classes in French, English, European literature, history and geography of China and the west, philosophy, mathematics, physics and natural sciences. The goal of the program was the successful completion of examinations equivalent to those of the French baccalaureate, and the possibility of advancing to the *cours supérieur* at Aurore. The *cours supérieur* was also of a three-year duration in preparation for either *licence-ès-lettres* or *licence-ès-sciences* with various specialisations within each program.<sup>201</sup>

The next step in the development of the university was the addition of a Medical School, Engineering Faculty and Law School. In each case there was debate over the make-up and direction of the program, but ultimately the Jesuits held their control over the curriculum. In 1909 the Faculty of Medicine accepted its first class of students. The proximity of the Hôpital Sainte-Marie of the French Concession facilitated the addition of this faculty.<sup>202</sup> As discussed in the 1903 debate, the Faculty of Medicine was seen to have value beyond the education of students in western practice, but also as an artery of French influence.<sup>203</sup> In the context of the Jesuit university, this influence, it was hoped would eventually extend to Christianity with students adopting French Catholicism along with Western medicine.

#### ***d. Bargaining for the evolution of the mission***

<sup>200</sup> De la Servièrre, "Une université française en Chine," p. 9.

<sup>201</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging...", p. 333.

<sup>202</sup> de la Hitte. "L'Université Aurore...", p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, 1903, p. .

While education and conversion remained the primary mission of Aurore modifications to other aspects occurred over time. The overlap and interplay of interests between the Jesuit mission and the government agenda with regard to Aurore was a constant dynamic in the development of the university. Just as the government was keen to use the Jesuit mission to extend French prestige and influence, the Jesuits used the protectorate over Catholics and *mission civilisatrice* to the advantage of Aurore.<sup>204</sup> Despite rampant anti-clericalism in France, the Jesuits were consistently able to get assistance in the pursuit of their educational mission in Shanghai. Government and military officials from the Ambassador and Consul to the commander of the expeditionary force endorsed or contributed to the development of the university.

The language of instruction was always a contentious element in the execution of the Jesuit mission at Aurore. French, Chinese and English each had their supporters – French was most strongly endorsed by the French government and many of the teachers – Jesuit and lay; Chinese was favoured by some of the students and certain Jesuit teachers; English was the choice of a majority of the student population. As the mission evolved French was entrenched as the language of instruction with the exception of certain courses in Chinese Law, and language classes. Students were expected to have a sufficient level on entry to attend regular classes. Those without French-language skills could take a one-year preparatory course in French before entering the mainstream program.

The Jesuits justified the use of French as the most authentic language for the pursuit of a European education,

The Chinese people like to go back to the origins of things and they know that, in matters of science, French owes much to Latin and is its main scion. . . They trust teachers such as [French Catholic] missionaries whose knowledge of Latin and Greek make them versed in the etymology of the scientific vocabulary of all disciplines. . . . They know that French represents a

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<sup>204</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 676.



good half of the world civilization, and that it is the key to disinterested higher studies, in short to science.<sup>205</sup>

The place of the French language in the mission of Aurore is best summarised in a series of letters from the rector of the university, P. Pierre Lefebvre, to a Jesuit superior in Paris, “If you plan, within a few years, to have all the courses taught in Chinese, please stop all projects of construction and development. This measure would indeed be the death warrant of Aurore, because students would not apply here to find what is already well provided by other institutions.”<sup>206</sup>

Following a directive to use the Chinese language for instruction in religious education P. Lefebvre laments, “When the apostolic delegate asked what we did [in catechetical classes and in our sermons], I explained to him we did it in French because it seemed more useful for our students and for promoting the holy cause. Now that things have been decided against us, I wash my hands of the whole business if results are not as good as those we obtained before.”<sup>207</sup>

In offering a place where Chinese students could enjoy the advantages of a foreign education within their own borders, and the particular benefits of French language, culture and educational practices, the Jesuits of Aurore may have attained their greatest success toward the goals of their mission and in the attempt to create sympathy within the Chinese elite for Catholicism. The Chinese governor of Jiangsu Province noted that Aurore enjoyed an excellent reputation beyond the city of Shanghai and even beyond the borders of China. As a testament to this status he sent his own son there to study.<sup>208</sup>

### 3. Cultural Contact: Offering the French experience

<sup>205</sup> Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus, Fichier 2-51 complément, “Aurore, Université française de Lo Ka wei, près Changhai” (ca. 1907), p. 4, cited in Wiest, “Bringing Christ to the Nations...”, p. 671.

<sup>206</sup> Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus, Fichier 323, letter of Lefebvre to R.P. F. Mollet, April 21, 1928, cited in Wiest, “Bringing Christ to the Nations...”, p. 670-671.

<sup>207</sup> Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus, Fichier 323, letter of Lefebvre to R.P. Provincial, September 28, 1928, cited in Wiest, “Bringing Christ to the Nations...”, p. 671-672. The apostolic delegate at that time was Archbishop Celso Costantini.

<sup>208</sup> de la Hitte, “L’Université Aurore...”, p. 2.

At Aurore, there was an attempt to foster close relationships between faculty and students, particularly in the early years. The ratio of students to faculty/administrators was very low and there were frequent exchanges outside the classroom. There were, however, several instances when the relationships became frayed. Ultimately, faculty and administrators remained focused on their prime mission, providing a French-quality and content education in Shanghai.

One of the issues that led to the split between the Jesuits and Ma in 1905 persisted throughout the duration of Aurore – student involvement in politics. Taking the view that these endeavours distracted students from their primary purpose, to get an education, involvement in politics was discouraged and could even be met with expulsion. Still the police were called many times to intervene in political activities on campus, particularly in times of tension in the broader city.

The Jesuits generally kept themselves at a distance from politics. The government in France was deeply anti-clerical; by not meddling in the affairs of state at home the Jesuits were able to secure government co-operation or at least non-intervention in their mission in Shanghai. They also avoided involvement in Chinese politics, no small feat in the tumultuous early years of the twentieth century, allowing the university to remain open and with government sanction through the revolution and change in regime. It was important that students also avoid political activism, both because it would distract from their studies and to insulate the institution. In the early days of the Xinhai revolution the rector, Jacques de Lapparent, recorded: “The revolution that started on the 12 or 13 of October in Wuchang has spread to several provinces.[...]Those among our students whose families live in these areas are worried.[...]This situation is not conducive to schoolwork but teaching will continue, however, as if nothing happened.”<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus, Zhendan diary, October 27, 1911, cited in Wiest, “Bringing Christ to the Nations...”, p. 675.

Rules were strict and supervision was kept close, aided by the 5:1 student to faculty ratio, and the participation of Chinese volunteers and benefactors organised by P. Li.<sup>210</sup> By installing a close Chinese supervision and discipline within the Jesuit structure the students could identify with the expectations and the Jesuits could maintain order, but have the freedom to cultivate relationships. In later years, however, about two-thirds of the faculty were Chinese, with the other third made up of a combination of Jesuit and lay Europeans.<sup>211</sup>

Despite tight discipline the familiarity between students and faculty bred a good rapport. The students held their professors in high esteem and showed their respect by studying diligently. Both groups demonstrated a desire to maintain the reputation of the institution. Students generally held to an 8:30pm curfew, by which time they were expected to be in their rooms quietly studying. Lights-out came at only 10pm.

Student life was all study and quiet time. Physical activity was encouraged as part of the university experience at Aurore. The university was well-endowed with sporting opportunities featuring five tennis courts, two basketball courts a running track and one of the best soccer fields in the city, “volontiers emprunté par la Ligue Anglaise, ce qui n’est pas peu dire.”<sup>212</sup> The greatest freedom for the students was over religion. They were free to practice as they saw fit and there was no proselytising by the Jesuits. Ultimately, Christians only ever accounted for about one quarter of the student population.

The overall quality of the teaching combined with the diligence of the students admitted to the university ensured that a large majority of graduates went on to successful careers, whether in law, politics, medicine or another field. The experience of student life also aided in future achievement.

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<sup>210</sup> de la Servière, “Une université française en Chine,” p. 7.

<sup>211</sup> de la Hitte, “L’Université Aurore...”, p. 3.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

In the pursuit of their mission the Jesuits of Aurore ensured the stability, academic standard and financial viability that would permit the institution to foster the advancement of Catholicism in China. The protection of the French government through the religious protectorate and the physical location within the French Concession of Shanghai ensured the stability of Aurore even as revolution, riot, war and political crisis went on around it. The Concession police force was called on campus as needed and the French military was stationed nearby proving a deterrent to riotous instability; while the campus visits of French military and civic leaders, and the regular involvement of the consul-general at convocation demonstrated a continuity of authority.

Achieving a high academic standard was a founding principle of Aurore. In fact, the recognition of an Aurore education as superior to that of similar schools was seen as an indicator of the success of the institution.<sup>213</sup> The education at the university was always intended to rival those offered in Europe. Gaining official recognition for the qualifications conferred was relentlessly pursued. The first request for accreditation was made to the Viceroy of Nanjing by three students trained at Aurore, who subsequently passed the Imperial examinations in 1905. They wanted to return to Aurore for further study and hoped that their work would result in certification recognised by the Chinese government.<sup>214</sup>

Though official recognition for the programs was not granted immediately, the Jesuits followed the Chinese rules and regulations on education and made the required changes to their structure. By 1912 they obtained the official recognition of the university and the degrees it granted from the fledgling Chinese republic.<sup>215</sup> In fact, at that time the Jesuits felt that they had established the only European-standard university in Shanghai, suggesting that the Anglican St. John's University was more like a high-school, the German medical school was by design a

<sup>213</sup> "Le Progres en Chine" in *Relations de Chine*, (April 1906), p. 92 – "il faut que les sujets sortant d'ici éclipsent ceux sortant d'écoles semblables."

<sup>214</sup> "Université de Zi-ka-wei" in *Relations de Chine*, (April 1905), p. 528.

<sup>215</sup> de la Hitte, , "L'Université Aurore...", p. 2.

preparatory institution, and the School of the Arsenal was an insubstantial copy of the *École des arts et manufactures* in Paris – “Seule Aurore nous paraît avoir les caractères sinon d’une université.”<sup>216</sup>

Aurore was responsible for training many of Shanghai’s elite. Graduates would go on to become the leaders of large enterprises, such as the Shanghai Electric Company, various railway lines, and the tramline in Beijing.<sup>217</sup> The modifications to the curriculum – adding new departments, broadening the expertise of the faculty, expanding the opportunities for in-depth research – led to an increase in Aurore alumni pursuing further study overseas, even earning entry into doctoral programs at the Sorbonne.<sup>218</sup>

Despite the assertion that the university would not receive government financial support, such funding did materialise. The Jesuits made use of their understood position as an unofficial agent of the French imperialist agenda through the *mission civilisatrice*. The strength of French Jesuit institutions limited the impact of British, American and German imperial ambitions.<sup>219</sup> In the context of this understanding, state purse strings were loosened to support the mission of Aurore, at least as far as it overlapped with the mission of the government.

Through institutional stability, high academic standards and achievement, and a secure financial situation the Jesuit mission of education and civilisation could be pursued at the Université Aurore, the French-Catholic university of Shanghai for the education of Chinese.

#### 4. Conclusion

Given its place within the French cultural policy overseas and its importance as a seat of higher learning in Shanghai, the Université Aurore holds a singular place in the discussion of the *mission civilisatrice* in China. The cultural exchange and personal interrelationships fostered in

<sup>216</sup> “Changhai, centre scientifique et littéraire” in *Relations de Chine*, (July 1913), p. 296.

<sup>217</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 49.

<sup>218</sup> Wiest, “Bringing Christ to the Nations...”, p. 677.

<sup>219</sup> Bays. *Christianity in China...*, p. 102.

the mission of the Université Aurore would resonate for the duration of French presence in Shanghai and beyond.

A key component of the educational mission of the Jesuits of Aurore was in the accreditation of the programs by both the French and Chinese governments. The Chinese educational system required numerous concessions from the French-style set up under which Aurore was organised, but the Jesuits were able to satisfy these conditions to gain recognition by the Chinese Republic. It took a few years longer to convince the French educational authorities that the programs in Shanghai were equivalent to those offered in France, but this status was also achieved. However, the place of Aurore as an educational institution in Asia would go much further. It was universally recognised as the best French-language university in China and perhaps in all of Asia. It was ranked on par with the best of the foreign or Chinese institutions of higher learning. Earning a degree from Aurore was almost a ticket to success for the Chinese graduates. Standards were kept very high and graduates made up only a small fraction of enrolments. This only contributed to the excellent reputation that the university and its degrees would carry.

The implementation of a French educational structure into the Chinese cultural environment must be largely viewed as a success. The teaching was of the highest standard; the facilities and environment fostered an academic atmosphere; the administration was stable and bred confidence in the institution. Aurore was a useful example for the modernisation of higher education in China. Graduates played an important role in the development of the nation as scholars, intellectuals, doctors, engineers and lawyers as the country was reborn as a republic after millennia of imperial rule.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 668.

The fact that this was accomplished under a stiflingly authoritarian hierarchy was a persistent point of friction with the students. The issues surrounding the closing of the original Aurore, and subsequent questioning of foreign control in education were the greatest challenges to the mission in education. The control of the student population demanded by the Jesuit structure, particularly the prohibition on political involvement, strained relationships between students and the institution, but not between the students and the faculty; and the prohibition allowed Aurore to remain in the good graces of each Chinese regime, maintaining stability and allowing the continuous pursuit of academic achievement.<sup>221</sup>

Despite the dedication to high academic standards, the adherence of the programs at Aurore to the French system meant that they were not always relevant in the Chinese context. As a result, Aurore became a first-step in longer process of academic development that may have included going overseas. Ironically, allowing students to remain in China was part of the original academic mission of Aurore. The university was also surprisingly weak in scientific contributions. Even though there was access to some of the best scientific infrastructure in Asia (observatory, museum, library, etc.) and the Jesuits had a long tradition of contribution to science; research, either by students or Jesuit scholars, was not a priority. Aurore was much more about taught courses than research and discovery.<sup>222</sup> In the final assessment Aurore was a French Catholic institution, not the meeting point between Chinese and western cultures that Ma Xiangbo dreamt to foster in 1903

Though the Jesuits executed their indirect evangelisation through education as scripted – they provided high-quality education, access to Western learning and technology, and a strong moral framework – mass conversions to Catholicism did not occur. In fact, up to 1912 there were

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<sup>221</sup> Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging...", p. 335.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335-336.

none. Three conversions was the greatest number attained in any of the first thirty years. In 1933 there were eleven conversions and the average from that point forward was in double digits. However, when the increase in student population is considered, about eight times more students in the later period, twenty or twenty-five conversions per year becomes less significant.<sup>223</sup>

The Jesuit model for the mission at Aurore was built upon the presence of the Catholic faith without proselytisation in the model of Matteo Ricci. In Shanghai the churches were open to students with services in French and Chinese, the university was active with an excellent reputation, and the hospital showed off western medical science. The Jesuits maintained charities for the poor and orphans, operated primary and secondary schools, the meteorological observatory, an astronomical observatory, museums and a printer, which published Sun Zhongshan's *Three People's Principles*.<sup>224</sup> All of this good work helped the Jesuits attain an excellent reputation, yet this did not translate into conversions as hoped.

The lessons at Aurore extended beyond academics. The mission included the assimilation of values. These values included a commitment to the nation, respect for others and continuous personal growth intellectually and morally. These lessons were as well learned by the dedicated Chinese students as the lessons of the classroom. Graduates were proud of their alma mater and credited their Jesuit teachers with giving them skills in both their field and personal development.<sup>225</sup>

The Jesuit Mission did not have a monopoly on Shanghai. In fact, there was a Protestant university, St. John's, competing for students and souls. Still, the Jesuits were singled out for their contribution. Viewed as more successful in converting the Chinese to Christianity,<sup>226</sup> Jesuit

<sup>223</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 674.

<sup>224</sup> Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 52.

<sup>225</sup> Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations...", p. 674.

<sup>226</sup> *National Geographic*, vol. 185, no 3, March 1994, p. 28.



influence in Shanghai was seen as predominantly positive, not least because they were viewed as the first European sinologists.<sup>227</sup>

The indirect evangelisation of the mission in education created a new intellectual class that Shanghai had not previously seen. The expected, or hoped, step from cultural awareness to the embracing of Christianity did not occur in significant numbers. Though Catholic conversions were few, cultural conversions were plentiful; the success of the *mission civilisatrice* in education only extended as far the adoption of certain aspects of lifestyle; it did not lead to the dawn of a new Catholic China. Whether the Chinese actually converted to Catholicism or not is immaterial to the importance of religion within the French identity promoted by the *mission civilisatrice* and presence of a French Catholic influence on the Chinese population of Shanghai.

The establishment of the Université Aurore was seen as means of exerting influence and representing French identity.<sup>228</sup> Support for the creation of a Faculty of Medicine at the university was hailed as a means of establishing French identity. The Law School, added in 1911, taught French philosophy, ideology and legal method, and had a great influence in shaping Chinese public policy in later years. Though still dominated by English, it was thanks to the Université Aurore that Shanghai was the most French city in China.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> *C'est ce qu'a dit le Sinologue*. Hervouet au Colloque de Sinologie de Chantilly. Ce propos figure dans les Actes de ce colloque, p. 23 cited in Metzger, *Les Lauriers de Shanghai...*, p. 52; "le mérite des missionnaires jésuites, ce fut d'être les premiers sinologues européens".

<sup>228</sup> *La Revue politique et parlementaire...*, March 1903, pp. 326-330.

<sup>229</sup> Weber. *La France en Chine...*, p. 117.

## CONCLUSION

In the context of nineteenth century imperialism the French, perhaps more than any of the other Imperial Powers, sought to export a cultural component in addition to the economic motive for expansion. From the beginnings of French settlement in Shanghai in the middle of the century an independent French agenda and identity can be seen to develop. Shanghai came to be known as the “Paris of the East” with a distinctive French aesthetic in the national concession territory, recognisable elements of cultural expression among the French residents and the implementation of the *mission civilisatrice* during the 1900 to 1912 period.

The physical construction of the French Concession had a significant impact on the creation of the “Paris of the East.” It was by design that the French authorities and residents of Shanghai established a European living environment. The notable characteristics of the French aesthetic of tree-lined boulevards, gardens and parks were accompanied by the latest in French technological modernity including electric street-lights and a tramline, and the mechanisms of the French economic apparatus.

The terms of the Treaty of Whampoa set the parameters in which the French identity of Shanghai could be incubated and grow. Despite a comparatively late arrival in East Asia the French were among the first to establish permanent communities in China. The independence of the French Concession from the amalgamated settlement of the other Powers permitted the development of a unique French character under purely French administration. The opportunity to maintain the interactions and leisure of France through the importation of goods, use of the French language and adherence to the Catholic faith ensured the presence of recognisably French elements in the Shanghai community.

The intermingling of the international communities in crisis and in daily-life meant that the characteristics of being French in Shanghai would be somewhat different from being French

in Paris. The Boxer Rebellion united the sometimes disparate foreign communities into a cohesive body for mutual defence. The Russo-Japanese War and its aftermath brought French intellectuals in Shanghai into closer partnerships with their Chinese counterparts than had previously been the case.

Despite the identification with the French capital and the presence of French amenities and luxuries, the economic and political power in Shanghai rested within the borders of the International Settlement. The image association was a romantic fallacy that belied the dominance of the British economy and the political might of the Municipal Council of the International Settlement. The façade of a French aesthetic in the French Concession that made it desirable for residence and leisure did not equate to French pre-eminence in business or the exercise of political power. The international dynamics of Shanghai meant that the implementation of a French agenda was always to be filtered through the prerogatives of the British position.

The distinctness of being French in Shanghai was as evident in its exportation through the *mission civilisatrice* as in the life led by the French residents or the city they constructed. The centuries-old Jesuit mission in China was predominantly taken up by French Jesuits on the return of the Order to China in the mid-nineteenth century. Still guided by Matteo Ricci's top-down theories on indirect conversion The Jesuits had founded a French language and curriculum university by 1903 that sought to fulfil this mission. Overcoming the anti-clericalism that divided the French state, even entering into a tenuous alliance for the greater good of French influence overseas, the Jesuits and French administration in Shanghai were able to implement an educational strategy to promote the French language and culture among the Chinese.

With the endorsement and financial support of the state and despite a faltering start, the Université Aurore was able to establish a reputation for quality that aided in the accomplishment of both the Jesuit and government mission. The educational programs, modeled on those in

France and executed in the French Concession of Shanghai demonstrated the commitment of the French overseas community to the *mission civilisatrice* through the imparting of French culture. The French self-conception and justification for imperialism included the notion that there was a duty to bring culture and civilisation to the world. This was certainly true for the community that took up residence in Shanghai, and the most tangible example of the unloading of this burden was through education, particularly at the Université Aurore.

The French Concession contributed to the recognition of Shanghai as the Paris of the East in part because it looked French. The French Concession operated as a French community. The French residents saw themselves as a French society, while also recognising their membership in the foreign community of Shanghai. The French presence is most clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the *mission civilisatrice*. These activities, in the context of the French aesthetic and cultural activities of the city made the strongest contribution in creating and maintaining Shanghai as “the Paris of the East.”

The fact that French identity was able to manifest itself in concentrated areas where it could be influential, such as Catholicism, intellectual life and entertainment, is an anomaly given the supremacy of the English language and the commercial power of Britain and the United States relative to France. French presence was powerful enough to maintain independent operations within the French Concession, but could not bring these values to bear on the extended foreign community

The French community of Shanghai was the product of a French environment, but external pressures from the British-dominated international community to which they also belonged and the deepening of relationships with certain strata of the Chinese population led to a modified French existence. The realisation that France could not hold an ascendant position in economic or political power led the French to seek other avenues of influence. In the same way

that the Boxer Rebellion brought the foreign community closer, the Russo-Japanese War and Chinese reform movements brought Chinese and French intellectuals together. The French of Shanghai came to see themselves as the moral and intellectual leaders of city.

This leadership was manifest in the implementation of French educational institutions for the edification of the Chinese in Shanghai. Under the auspices of the Religious Protectorate, Jesuit schools brought French education, culture and values to the Chinese in the creation of an elite class sympathetic to French prerogatives and Catholicism. Though the religious component was largely unsuccessful, the cultural and philosophical elements of the French *mission civilisatrice* did take root in Shanghai. Within this limited framework, the manifestation of humanitarianism and the significant place of Catholicism for the French is made clear. On such a scale the success of the mission was significant.

French identity in the “Paris of the East” could be seen, felt and experienced. It could be seen in the “corner of Europe” the French built through the implementation of their economic systems, the continental infrastructure that rivalled France in its cutting-edge modernity and the aesthetics of the environment. It could be felt in the lifestyle enjoyed by the French and other members of the international community with access to the comforts and trappings of the French capital, the presence of the French language and Catholic religion. It could be experienced in the propagation of the *mission civilisatrice*, particularly in education, whereby a selection of the Chinese community were invited to participate in French knowledge, values and culture, and to carry this cognisance into their community. While distinct from the precise comprehension of ‘being French’ in a Parisian context, the “Paris of the East” certainly represented a manner of ‘being French.’ In the 1900 to 1912 period the “Paris of the East”, though not culturally identical to Paris, was able to offer an alternative French existence in Shanghai.

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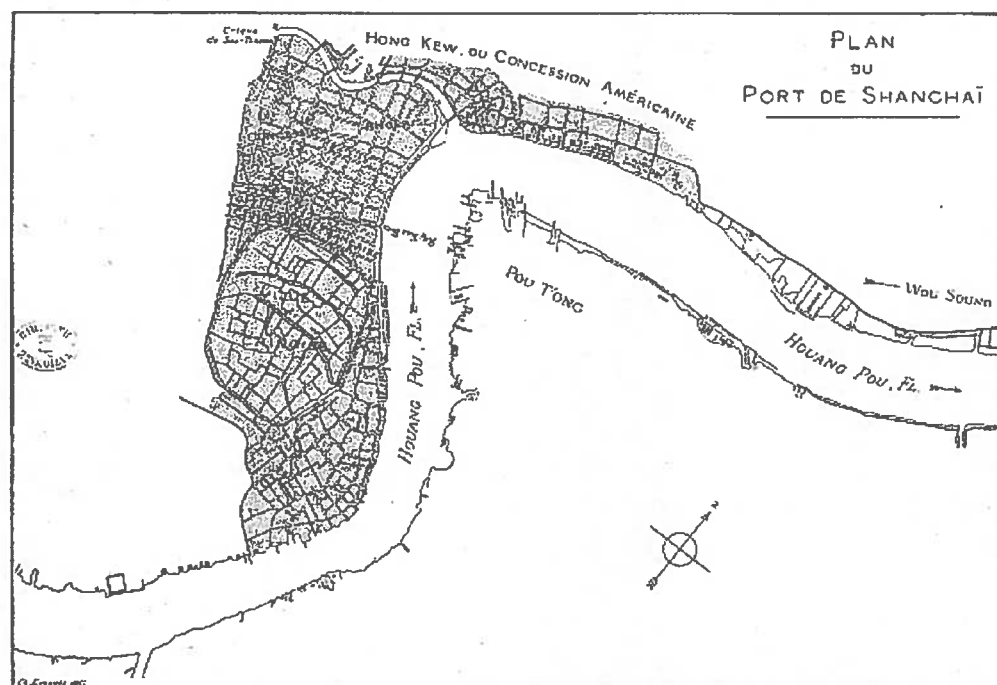
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**APPENDIX I****ROMANISATION TABLE**

| <b><u>Pinyin</u></b> | <b><u>Wade-Giles</u></b> | <b><u>Common French</u></b> | <b><u>Other</u></b>       |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Beijing              | Pei-ching                | Pékin                       | Peking                    |
| Cixi                 | Tz'u-Hsi                 | Ts'eu-hi                    | --                        |
| Fuzhou               | Fu-chou                  | Fou-Tchéou                  | Foochow/Fuchow            |
| Guangzhou            | Kuang-chou               | Canton                      | Canton                    |
| Guomindang           | Kuomintang               | Kuo-Min-Tang                | Kouo-Min-Tang             |
| Huangpu (river)      | Huang-P'u                | Houang-P'ou                 | Whang-poo/Whampu          |
| Huangpu (Treaty of)  | Huang-P'u                | Whampoa                     | --                        |
| Nanjing              | Nan-ching                | Nankin                      | Nanking                   |
| Ningbo               | Ning-po                  | Ning Po                     | --                        |
| Qing                 | Ch'ing                   | T'sing                      | Manchu/Mandchou           |
| Shanghai             | --                       | Chang- haï                  | --                        |
| Sun Zhongshan        | Sun Yat-sen              | Sun Yat-sen                 | Sun Wen/Souen Wen         |
| Tianjin              | T'ien-tsin               | Tien Tsin                   | Tientsin                  |
| Xiamen               | Hsia-men                 | Amoy                        | Amoy                      |
| Xinhai               | Hsinhai                  | --                          | --                        |
| Xujiahui             | Hsu Chia-hui             | Siu kia-hoei                | Zi-ka-wei/Ziccawei        |
| Yuan Shikai          | Yuan Shih-k'ai           | Yuan Shikai                 | Yuan Weiting/Yuan Rong'an |

## APPENDIX II - MAPS



Shanghai, circa 1850

Shanghai 1912



**APPENDIX III****ARTICLE XXII  
OF THE TREATY OF WHAMPOA**

Tout Français qui, conformément aux stipulations de l'article II, arrivera dans l'un des cinq ports, pourra, quelle que soit la durée de son séjour, y louer des maisons et des magasins pour déposer ses marchandises, ou bien affermer des terrains et y bâtir lui-même des maisons et des magasins. Les Français pourront, de la même manière, établir des églises, des hôpitaux, des hospices, des écoles et des cimetières. Il est bien entendu, d'ailleurs, que le nombre des maisons et l'étendue des terrains à affecter aux Français dans les cinq ports ne seront point limités et qu'ils seront déterminés d'après les besoins et les convenances des ayants droit.

APPENDIX IV

Zheng Guanying, *Sheng shi wei yan [Words of warning to a seemingly prosperous age]*. p. 685.

We try to go the Western way (do Western business), we should also make weapons, set up power lines, build railways, open mines, make textiles, but the machines and skilled workers are all from overseas. We still do not have the knowledge, we did not learn anything. Bismark said we only know how to buy ships and cannon, but do not study the skill, do not learn the trades, we are not close to the key to the door of wealth and strength, this is no joking matter.

「年來當道講求洋務，亦嘗造槍炮，設電線，  
建鐵路、開礦、織布以起而應之矣，惟所用機  
器，所聘工師，皆來自外洋。上下因循，不知  
通變。德相卑士麥謂我國只知選購船炮，不重  
藝學，不興商務，尙未知富強之本，非虛言也。」

[註六]

APPENDIX V